

MARCH OF EVENTS

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(Being the case of the Indian National Congress)

1942-1945

COMPILERS .

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VIOLET ALVA

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EXPLANATION

This compilation is the second volume of the "March of Events," the first having been published on 15th September 1940. Coming five years thereafter, it is brought up to and includes the Resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee in September, 1945, resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee in December, 1945, and the Congress Election Manifesto published on 11th December, 1945.

This volume opens with the epoch-making Resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee on 8th August 1942, popularly known as "Quit India" Resolution. Therefore, this volume could have come out under some grandiose title like "The War of Indian Independence." The title would, however, not be in keeping with the contents inasmuch as they will not disclose an account of the doings of the people, which were undoubtedly heroic and no less glorious from the Indian point of view than those of the "Maquis of France" or of the "Partisans" of Marshal Tito. This compilation is a political student's *Vade Mecum* and, consequently, appears under a more modest title. Mahatma Gandhi's letters and statements naturally have a pride of place in this volume as he was the inventor of "Quit India" and was the Commander-in-Chief of the movement-to-be. The statements of the representatives of the alien power in India have been included and an account has also been given of Mahatma Gandhi's efforts for Hindu-Muslim conciliation. As a sort of Preface are included the Cripps Proposals and the Working Committee's Resolution of 14th July 1942.

Maximum attention has been paid to arrange all the material in chronological order so that it should give the reader an exact idea of the political developments. It is hoped this will help the reader in understanding and correctly estimating the Congress stand.

Congress House

Bombay, December 20th, 1945

S K PATIL,

General Secretary,

Bombay Provincial Congress Committee.

Homage

The All-India Congress Committee, at its first meeting after more than three years of wanton suppression by the British Government, desires to convey its greetings and congratulations to the nation for the courage and endurance with which it withstood the fierce and violent onslaught of British power and its deep sympathy to all those who suffered during these three years of military, police and ordinance rule

September 1945

QUIT INDIA

WITHIN FIVE YEARS

*Sardar Vallabhbhai's
notice to the British*

September 11, 1945.

A solemn warning that the Indians themselves would take control of their country within five years if the British did not allow it earlier, was made today by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The Congress, he declared, was waiting to see whether the Labour Government would come forward with a proposal. Pending that he predicted that the Congress would make no new move. Asked specifically whether he had in his own mind any time-limit for India to obtain independence, Sardar Patel said, 'We will not wait long'

QUIT ASIA

December, 1945

Addressing a mammoth meeting at Calcutta, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said.

"Let us give the British people notice that India will not allow the foreign power to stay for all time to come. We stand by the 'Quit India' Resolution. The demand is now being modified to mean 'Quit Asia,' as otherwise there can be no peace in Asia."

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CRIPPS PROPOSALS

HIS Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

HIS Majesty's Government, therefore, make the following declaration

(a) Immediately upon cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India in the manner described hereafter an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.

(c) HIS Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to

I. The right of any province of British India, that is not prepared to accept the new constitution, to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires.

With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, HIS Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

II The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands, it will make provision, in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities, but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities

Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation This new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion as to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members

(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Gov-

ernment of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vast and essential for the future freedom of India'

Text of the resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on 14th July 1942

The events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination even at its best is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interests of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another Ever since the outbreak of the world war, the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment carried to its logical extreme would be duly appreciated and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It has also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's hold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible

manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress Representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms.

The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign Power. The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis.

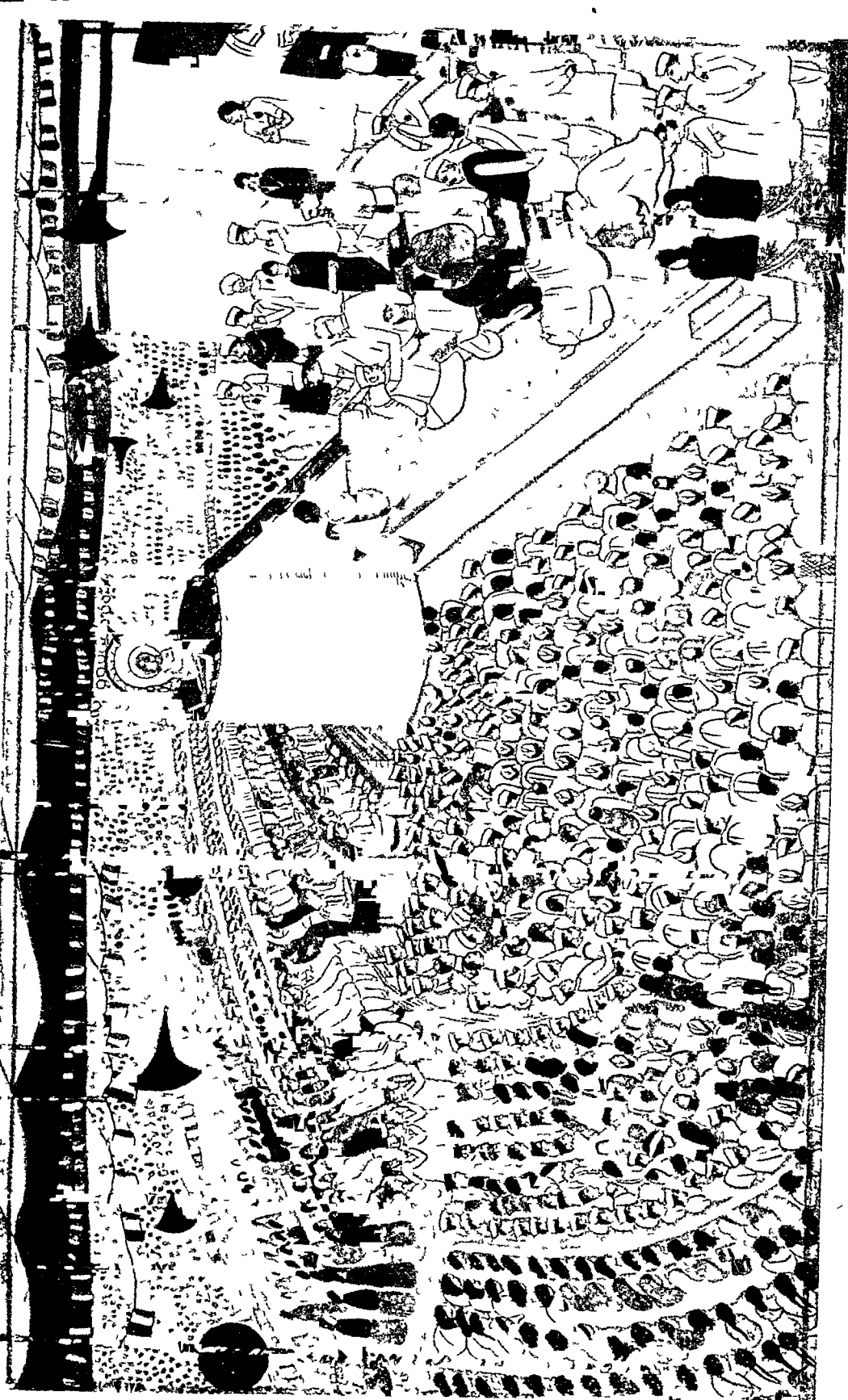
The present political parties formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, the realisation will come home that the princes, 'jagirdars,' 'zamindars' and proprietors and

monied class derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India which will later evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the co-operation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression.

It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the peoples' united will and strength behind it. In making the proposal for the withdrawal of the British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other Power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers.

The Congress is, therefore, agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China. The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such a withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional Government in India and co-operation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China. The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks,

however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom, and more especially at the present critical juncture in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils. While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty steps and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations



August 8, 1942 Resolution

On August 8, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed the following Resolution —

"The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself, and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

"The Committee has viewed with dismay, the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those, who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failures. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire,

instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for, by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm The ending of British rule in this country is thus vital and immediate issue on which depends the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations and give these Nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations

"The peril of to-day, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses Only the glow of freedom now can realise that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war

"The A - I C C , therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India On the declaration of India's independence, a Provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom The Provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country It will thus be a composite Government representative of all important sections of the people of India Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its

Allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, Indonesia, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now, must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial Power.

"While the A-I C C must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air force would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

"An independent India would gladly join such a world Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems

"Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

"The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need and some times even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

"The A-I C C would yet again at this last moment in the interest of the world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from

endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

"The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

"Lastly whilst the A-I C C has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A-I C C wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."

The resolution was passed with practical unanimity, about 13 members dissenting.

The Congress leaders were arrested before dawn on August 9, 1942.

August 9, 1942

There was a spontaneous haltal Processions and demonstrations were banned and dispersed by the police with the help of lathis and tear gas No meetings were allowed By noon-time demonstrators had been fired upon in several places In the evening a huge gathering at Shivaji Park, including several thousand women was prevented from holding a meeting (which was to have been addressed by the late Kasturba Gandhi) by repeated lathi charges and tear gas attacks upon the crowd At sundown the first bus was smashed and burnt near the Tilak Bridge'

The newspapers were subjected to heavy censorship in those days Disturbances followed the news of the leaders' arrest, occurring as the news travelled to the interior, and they tended to assume a conspiratorial and terroristic aspect only after the more peaceful and non-violent forms of demonstration and protest were banned and--often with undue severity--suppressed by the police

The Government publication, "Congress Responsibility For Disturbances," in spite of the author's intentions, tends to support this view

"On August 9 there were disturbances in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona but the rest of the country remained quiet On August 10, disturbances occurred also in Delhi and a few towns in the United Provinces, but still no serious repercussions were reported from elsewhere It was from August 11 that the situation began to deteriorate rapidly From then onwards, apart from the hartals, protest meetings and similar demonstrations that were to be expected, concerted outbreaks of violence, arson, murder and sabotage took place "

Ever since the Working Committee's Resolution was passed (14th July) the Government were busy hatching plans both to damn and to fight the Congress

On July 17 Sir Frederick Puckle, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Information and Broadcasting, called his stenographer and dictated a confidential circular to be sent to the Chief Secretaries of all Provincial Governments.

In a strikingly forthright manner the letter began

"We have three weeks until the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on August the 7th During this time the matter is mainly a problem of propaganda to mobilize public opinion against the concrete proposals, contained in the Congress Resolution . "

The 'main lines of publicity' suggested by Sir Frederick included the argument that

"a campaign of Civil Disobedience involves recklessly putting the cause of the United Nations in jeopardy and encouraging the Axis it is a direct invitation to Japan "

"It would be advisable at the present moment," wrote Sir Frederick, "to abstain from attacking the Congress too directly, e.g., by calling it a Fifth Column, etc, and certainly to abstain from attacks on individuals, either may only rally loyal Congressmen in support of a cause in which they may not genuinely believe For the moment the object is to mobilize public opinion against the Congress as detrimental to the successful conduct of the war Loyalists and waverers may be assured that Government has the means to deal suitably with trouble and intends to use them Speeches, letters to the local press, leaflets, cartoons, posters, whispering campaigns are possible media for local publicity Instructions to All-India Radio stations will be given by the Centre "

This was the damning campaign which was followed by the arrests of all important leaders

That the campaign of maligning the Congress conducted by Sir Frederick Puckle was based on absolute falsehood can be proved by the following quotations —

Mahatma Gandhi in an article in "Harijan" dated June 21, 1942, wrote

"I have no desire whatever to woo any power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign yoke I have no desire to exchange the British for any foreign rule "

Mahatma Gandhi said with reference to Japan

"I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India I want India to oppose Japan to a man"

In his letter "To Every Japanese" he issued the warning

"India needs no aid from foreign powers You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent"

Again Mahatmaji wrote

"I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out, for Britain's defeat in Indian waters may mean only the loss of India, but if Japan wins, India loses everything"

At the A-I C C meeting on August 8, 1942 Mahatma Gandhi said

"Never believe—as I have never believed—that the British are going to fail I don't consider them to be a nation of cowards I know that before they accept defeat, every soul in England will be sacrificed"

At the same meeting Dr Rajendra Praasd said

"The demand for British withdrawal is not actuated by a desire to embarrass Britain or the Allies but the motive behind it is to enable India to defend herself and help the Allies in winning the war by bringing India's wholehearted support to the Allied cause"

It was repeatedly made clear that after passing the Resolution popularly called the "Quit India" Resolution, Mahatma Gandhi would put himself in touch with Viceroy for negotiations as to how the transfer of power could be effected with the maximum goodwill and minimum dislocation In an interview on August 6, 1942, Mahatmaji said

"I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress Resolution and the starting of the struggle A letter will go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but as an earnest pleading for

avoiding conflict. If there is a favourable response, then my letter can be the basis for negotiation."

At the meeting of the A-I C. C. Mahatmajī said

"The coming in of Japan will mean the end of China and perhaps of Russia. I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's defeat nor of China." He exhorted his audience 'to give up the attitude of mind which welcomes Japan.'

On July 5, 1942, Mahatma wrote in "Harijan"

"It has been pointed out that not to consent to the Allied troops remaining in India during the period of the war is to hand over India and China to Japan, and ensure the defeat of the Allied Powers. 'This could never have been contemplated by me.' The only answer, therefore, to give was to suffer the presence of the Allied troops but under circumstances the reverse of the existing. They will remain under permission of Free India and not in the role of masters but of friends."

The Working Committee in its Resolution made it clear that

"The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China and Russia whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations."

In the course of his authoritative exposition of the 'Quit India' Resolution the Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said —

"Let us have a declaration of Indian Independence forthwith and we on our part shall immediately enter into a treaty of alliance with the United Nations for the sole purpose of fighting and winning this war."

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

Resolution of Governor-General-in- Council

New Delhi, August 8, 1942

The A-ICC have ratified the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on August 8 That resolution demands the immediate withdrawal of British power from India, and sanctions "the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale" The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware, too, for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful, and in some cases violent activities, directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with defence measures, including recruitment

The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail They have been disappointed in that hope To a challenge such as the present there can only be one answer The Government of India would regard it as wholly incompatible with their responsibilities to the people of India and their obligations to the Allies that a demand should be discussed the acceptance of which would plunge India into confusion and anarchy internally, and would paralyse her effort in the common cause of human freedom

For the demand of the Congress leaders there is no warrant In the view of the Government of India that demand is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a full sense of responsibility on the part of the leaders of the Congress Party, or a full appreciation by them of the realities of the present situation The Congress Working Committee admit that "there may be risks involved" They are right

Acceptance of the resolution must mean the exposure of India to Axis attack from without Internally the withdrawal of British rule invites civil war, the collapse of law and order, the outbreak of communal feud, the dis-

location of economic life with its inevitable hardships Nor can the Government of India accept the claim of the Congress Party to speak for India as a whole

The Congress Party has for long occupied a position of great prominence and great importance in Indian political life At this day its importance is substantial But it is the duty of the Government of India to take a balanced view of the interests of all sections of Indian thought and Indian opinion And looking as they must to the repeated protests even in these last few days by the leaders of great communities and solidly established interests, by so many leaders of liberal thought, by those great sections of the population which are giving unstinted and invaluable support to the war against Axis aggression, they are confirmed in their view that that claim has no solid foundation, and that acceptance of the proposals now put forward by the Congress Party must mean the abandonment of all those large and powerful elements in the population which have condemned the course of action proposed by the Congress Party and which resent and resist the widespread dislocation which its acceptance would involve of India's war effort and of the general life of the community

Nor can the Congress leaders claim that only thus can India's future be assured. The Congress Party is not India's mouthpiece, yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood But for the resistance of the Congress Party to all constructive endeavours, India might even now be enjoying self-government

British policy for India's future stands clear It is that when hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself with full freedom of decision, and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of government which she regards as most suited to her conditions and that in the meantime Indian leaders shall fully participate in the government of their country and in the councils of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations The fullest opportunity for the attainment of self-gov-

ernment by the people of India has been guaranteed by His Majesty's Government. It is on the basis, fully accepted by His Majesty's Government and by the people of Great Britain, that the fullest opportunity shall be given for the attainment of self-government by the Indian people, that when the day of victory comes the final structure of India's constitution will be erected by Indians themselves. That those guarantees given by the British Parliament and the British people are accepted by the people of India we firmly believe.

The suggestion put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India, uncertain as to the future, are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country.

The leaders of the Congress Party have claimed that the withdrawal of British rule "with good-will" will "result in establishing a stable provisional government in India, and co-operation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China." There is no justification for those claims. Nor can the Government of India accept the suggestion that a stable provisional government could be formed in a moment of time, within a day or two of the withdrawal of British power.

Past experience has shown, to their profound regret, the existence of deep differences in this country, the harmonizing of which must be the object of all on whom responsibility falls, the removal of which is the ambition and the hope of the present Government of India. But to deny that those problems confront India today would be to ignore the facts, and the Government of India are satisfied that the interval between the withdrawal of British rule and the establishment of a stable provisional Government would provide an open opportunity for the enemies of order and for all dissident elements in the population.

In the view of the Government of India, it is not too much to say that acceptance of the demand now put forward by the Congress Party must mean the betrayal of the Allies, whether in or outside India, the betrayal in particular to Russia and China, the betrayal of those ideals to which so much support has been given and is given today from the true heart and mind of India, the betrayal of India's fighting men whose glory is so great, and the betrayal of all those loyal and co-operating elements which do not support the Congress Party, but which have played so active and so valuable a part in British India and the Indian States in the prosecution of the war

India has today a Government stronger and more representative than ever in the past, a Government predominantly Indian and non-official, a Government determined to prosecute the war and no less determined to lead India on to her political goal. There is nothing that the Government of India regret more than this challenge at so critical a juncture

But on them there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of the people without fear or favour. That task the Government of India will discharge in the face of the challenge now thrown down by the Congress Party with clean determination, but with an anxiety that action shall be preventive of the interruption of war effort and the other dangers to which they have referred rather than punitive, and with a full consciousness of responsibility to India and to the cause of the Allies and of civilisation

Their duty is plain and they have to discharge it, profoundly as they must deplore the situation which they have been called to face. They urge the people of India to unite with them in resistance to the present challenge of a Party. They appeal to them to lay aside all political differences, and for the period of war to place before all other considerations the defence of their country and the achievement of those common aims on which depends the

future not only of India but of all the freedom-loving peoples of the world

Shri Mahadev Desai Dies

The first sad news emanated from the place of Mahatma Gandhi's internment on 16th August 1942, communicating to the world the death of Shri Mahadev Desai, Mahatma's secretary. Government announced that he died of heart failure on 15th August and published a short statement from Mahatma Gandhi regarding the funeral rites. His body was duly cremated in the compound of the building in which they were interned. At that time Government did not let the public know that the place of internment was the Aga Khan Palace at Poona.

CHURCHILL SPEAKS ON INDIA

Special statement to Parliament

London, September 10, 1942

Mr Churchill during his eagerly awaited statement in the House of Commons today said —

"The course of events in India has been improving and is on the whole reassuring. The broad principles of the Declaration made by the British Government which formed the basis of the mission of the Lord Privy Seal (Sir Stafford Cripps) to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add to them and no one can take anything away.

"The good offices of Sir Stafford Cripps were rejected by the Indian Congress Party. This, however, does not end the matter. The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India (Cheers). It does not represent the majority of the people of India (Cheers). It does not even represent the Hindu masses (Cheers). It is a political organization built around a party ma-

chine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests (Cheers and laughter.) Outside that party and fundamentally opposed to it are 90 million Muslims in British India (here a member interjected 'Nonsense' and there were cries of 'Order') who have their rights of self-expression, 50 million depressed classes or untouchables, as they are called, because they are supposed to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow, and 95 million subjects of the Princes in India with whom we are bound by treaty. In all there are 235 millions in these three large groupings alone out of the 390 millions in all India. This takes no account of the large elements among Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in British India who deplore the present policy of the Congress Party.

"It is necessary that these main facts should not be overlooked here or abroad because no appreciation of the Indian problem or of the relations between India and Britain is possible without recognition of these basic data. The Congress Party has now abandoned the policy in many respects of non-violence which Mr. Gandhi has so long inculcated in theory and has come into the open as a revolutionary movement designed to paralyse communications by rail and telegraph and generally to promote disorder, looting of shops and sporadic attacks upon the Indian police accompanied from time to time by revolting atrocities the whole having intention or at any rate effect of hampering the defence of India against the Japanese invader who stands on the frontiers of Assam and also upon the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal.

"It may well be that these activities by the Congress Party have been aided by Japanese fifth-column work on a widely extended scale and with special direction to strategic points. It is noteworthy, for instance, that communications of the Indian forces defending Bengal on the Assam frontier have been specially attacked. In these circumstances the Vice-

roy and the Government of India with the unanimous support of the Viceroy's Council, the great majority of which are Indians patriotic and wise men—have felt it necessary to proclaim and suppress the central and provincial organs of this association which has become committed to hostile and criminal courses Mr Gandhi and other principal leaders have been interned under conditions of the highest comfort and consideration and will be kept out of harm's way until the troubles subside It is fortunate indeed that the Congress Party has no influence whatever with the martial races on whom the defence of India, apart from the British forces, largely depends Many of these races are divided by unbridgeable religious gulfs from the Hindu Congress and would never consent to be ruled by them nor shall they ever be against their will so subjugated " (Prolonged cheers)

Mr Churchill resumed

"There is no compulsory service in India, but upwards of one million Indians have volunteered to serve the cause of United Nations in this world struggle The bravery of Indian troops has been distinguished in many theatres of war and it is satisfactory to note that in these last two months when the Congress has been measuring its strength against the Government of India over 140,000 new volunteers for the army have come forward in loyal allegiance to the King-Emperor, thus surpassing all records in order to defend their native land

"So far as matters have gone up to the present, they have revealed the impotence of the Congress Party either to subdue or even to sway the Indian army, to draw from their duty the enormous body of Indian officials or, still less, to stir the vast Indian masses India is a continent almost as large and actually more populous than Europe and divided by racial and, above, all, religious differences far deeper than any that have separated the Europeans The whole administration of the Government of 390 mil-

lions who live in India is carried on by Indians, there being under 600 British members of the Indian Civil Service. All public services are working. In five Provinces including two of the greatest and comprising 110 million people, provincial Ministers responsible to their Legislatures stand at their posts. In many places both in town and country the population has rallied to the support of the civil power. The Congress conspiracy against communications is breaking down. Acts of pillage and arson are being repressed and punished with an incredibly small loss of life. Less than 500 persons have been killed over this mighty area of territory and population and it has only been necessary to move a few brigades of British troops here and there in support of the civil power. In most cases rioters have been successfully dealt with by the Indian police. I am sure the House would wish me to pay a tribute to the loyalty and steadfastness of the brave Indian police as well as to the Indian official class generally whose behaviour has been deserving of the highest praise. To sum up. The outstanding fact which has so far emerged from the violent action of the Congress Party has been its non-representative character and powerlessness to throw into confusion the normal peaceful life of India. It is the intention of Government to give all necessary support to the Viceroy and his Executive in the firm but tempered measures by which they are protecting the life of the Indian communities and leaving the British and Indian armies free to defend the soil of India against the Japanese.

"I may add that large reinforcements have reached India and that the number of white soldiers now in that country, although very small compared with its size and population, are larger than at any time in the British connection. I therefore, feel entitled to report to the House that the situation in India at this moment gives no occasion for undue despondency or alarm."

Did War Cabinet approve statement?

Labourite Aneurin Bevan asked if the War Cabinet approved the actual text of the Prime Minister's statement

Mr Churchill replied "It is my business to speak in the name of the War Cabinet and I have every reason to believe I am doing so I do not mean I submit every word of the statement and go through it line by line, but the general policy is the policy of the British Government (Cheers)

Amid many interruptions Mr Bevan demanded information as to whether the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Attlee, and the Leader of the House, Sir Stafford Cripps (who are Labour Members), agreed to the actual form of Mr. Churchill's statement

Mr Churchill "I have every reason to believe that my colleagues approved the statement as, I think did the House in general" (Cheers)

Mr Bevan interjected "They ought to be ashamed of themselves"

Mr Churchill, amid loud cheers and some interruptions, retorted "Mr Aneurin Bevan is a merchant of discourtesy I was about to say that up to a very late hour last night Mr Attlee and I were at work on the actual words of the statement"

Conservative William Astor declared that the statement would be very welcome to the gallant Indian troops in the Middle East whose conduct had filled all with the utmost admiration Another Conservative asked that the House should be given an opportunity to associate itself with Mr Churchill's tribute to those Indians who were carrying on their work in difficult circumstances

Lord Linlithgow

Calcutta, December 17, 1942

Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, in the course of his speech at the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce said —

" In the internal field we have, to my keen and deep regret, had to deal since I last addressed

you with an uprising, consequent on the programme of the leaders of the Congress Party, of great gravity and great severity. That uprising, which had no support from great sections of the Hindu community, from which the Muslim community and other important parts of the population of India dissociated themselves, which affected only in the smallest degree the Indian States, was perhaps the work of a numerically small but very important section. But that section, carefully organised and unscrupulous, I am sorry to say it, in the methods it adopted, indifferent to the creed of non-violence to which such prominence has been given, was able to cause immense damage, serious dislocation of communications, much destruction of public and private property, heavy loss to the tax-payer and deaths of many innocent persons. At a time when the efforts of all of us were directed to protecting India against Japanese aggression and to building up supplies and stores for our own defence and for the battle against the Axis it resulted in a serious diversion of military forces and an interruption, deeply to be regretted, in the war effort.

"To the sorrow of all of us who care for the good name of India those disturbances were disfigured by very shocking cases of brutality and violence. And a grievous feature of them is the use to which designing men endeavoured to turn, and indeed succeeded in many cases in turning the young enthusiasm, the intelligence, and the lack of experience of the student community. Those who diverted those young men, young men of such promise, with their future just opening before them, into the dangerous paths of civil tumult and disorder, carry an immense responsibility to India, and to the ardent and generous youth which they have led astray. To restore order everything possible was done to use the minimum degree of force, and to cause the minimum disturbance. The success of that policy is shown by the very low figures of casualties. The situation is well in hand as I speak

to you today, though even now in certain areas it continues to call for the utmost vigilance and care

"I would like to pay a tribute to the admirable work done in restoring order by the services, military and civil alike, and in particular by the police on whom there fell so heavy a burden. And I would like to say a word of warm and sincere thanks on behalf not only of myself and of my Government but on behalf of India, to those solid and sober elements throughout the country, who, in times of great difficulty stood by Government, gave their full co-operation to those whose business it was to maintain law and order, and at great risk to themselves and sometimes at the cost of grave injury, formed rallying points around which the law-abiding and the loyal citizens would gather, and from which they could get assurance and support."

* * *

"I listened with deep satisfaction to the remarks which you, Sir, were kind enough to make about the Governor-General and his Executive Council, and the tribute which you were good enough to pay to its work. Since we last met, that Council has undergone a material expansion. Working in the closest of contact with its members and with the Council as a whole, I can, from my own knowledge and experience, speak of its capacity, its courage, its unity, its devotion to the interests of India. I need not tell you how great is the value to the Governor-General of colleagues such as those with whom it is now my good fortune to work in the Executive Council.

"I have spoken often to you in my earlier addresses of the importance of unity in this country. Geographically India, for practical purposes, is one. I would judge it to be as important as it ever was in the past, nay, more important that we should seek to conserve that unity in so far as it may be built up consistently with full justice for the rights and the legitimate claims of the minorities, whether those minorities be great or small. That that would be a

desirable aim no one, gentlemen, can doubt who tests that proposition in terms of foreign policy, of tariff policy, of defence policy, of industrial development Can India speak with the authority that she is entitled to claim, can she play her part effectively at international discussions, at discussions with the other parts of the empire, if she is to speak with two voices? Indian unity, subject, as I have said, to full and sufficient provision for the minorities, accepted as such by those minorities, is of great and real importance if India is to carry the weight which she ought to carry in the counsels of the empire and of the world "

Government's Leonine Violence

From statements made by the Home Member on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly, the following will appear to be the official estimate of the effect of Government's leonine violence —

(From 9th August to December 31, 1942)

Persons arrested 60229

Persons detained under D I R 18000

Persons killed by police or military firing 940

Persons injured due to police or military firing 1630

Military had to be called out in about 60 places

Police resorted to firing on 538 occasions

Planes were used to machinegun people in 5 places

GANDHIJI'S FIFTH FAST

Full Text of Correspondence between Gandhi and Government prior to the fast

August 14th, 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying this step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you have the approval of your Indian 'colleagues' can have no significance except this, that in India you can always command such services. That

co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand So could I have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity That precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world-opinion veer round to the Congress as it had already begun doing and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand

The resolution says —“The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail They have been disappointed in that hope” I suppose wiser counsels here means abandonment of its demand by the Congress Why should the abandonment of the demand, legitimate at all times, be hoped for by a government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a challenge that could only be met by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party?

I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand ‘would plunge India into confusion’

Anyway, the summary rejection of the demand has plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify with the Allied cause.

The Government resolution says — 'The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware too for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities directed among other things, to interruption of communications and public utility services, the organisation of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants, and interference with defence measures including recruitment.' This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner, as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job which is harming the British people?

Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraphs, the Government, immediately they came to know of the 'preparations,' should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been the appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing. The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?

The Government resolution further says. 'The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet, in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts to bring India to full nation-

hood' It is a gross libel thus to accuse the oldest national organisation of India This language lies ill in the mouth of a Government which has, as can be proved from published records, consistently thwarted every national effort for attaining freedom, and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook

The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of the independence of India they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional Government they should ask the Muslim League to do so, and that any National Government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress

Let me examine the Government offer It is that "as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself with full freedom of decision and on a basis of embracing all and not only a single party, the form of Government which she regards as most suited to her conditions" Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now Will it be any more possible after the war, and if the parties have to act before independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, or without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them as they have done in the past and if they, the parties, oppose the Congress and its activities though they may do lip homage to independence, frustration is inherent in the Government offer Hence the logical cry of withdrawal first Only after the end of British Power and a fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative Government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible The living burial of the author of the demand has not resolved the deadlock, it has aggravated it

Then the resolution proceeds

'The suggestion put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India uncertain as to the future,

are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the aims of the invaders, is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country' I do not know about the millions but I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No Imperial Power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other Imperial Powers that it asks her to shed Imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motives. The Congress seeks to kill Imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interests of its own, apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting: "But on them lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interest of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour." All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the 'balance' between the parties for which it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common to the Government of India and us. To put in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that the freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I

can—and may I say—than even you can. In that misery, he tried to forget his old quarrel with Imperialism. He dreaded much more than I do the success of Fascism and Nazism. I have argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally. If notwithstanding the common cause the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of the Imperial policy. Their determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression. The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery enforced by the falsity with which the resolution is reeking adds strength to the Congress position.

It causes me deep pain to have to send you this long letter. But, however, much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard the pleading of one who claims to be a sincere friend of the British people. Heaven guide you!

I am yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

August 22 1942

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Thank you very much for your letter dated August 14, which reached me only a day or two ago. I have read, I need not say, what you have been good enough to say in your letter with very

close attention and I have given full weight to your views But I fear in the result that it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticisms which you advance of the resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be considered

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

September, 23, 1942

Sir,

In spite of the chorus of approval sung by the Indian Councillors and others, of the present Government policy in dealing with the Congress I venture to assert that had the Government but awaited my contemplated letter to His Excellency the Viceroy and the result thereafter, no calamity would have overtaken the country The reported deplorable destruction would have most certainly been avoided

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control I feel that the Government not the Congress were responsible for the destruction that has taken place

The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness

Since I am permitted to receive newspapers I feel that I owe it to the Government to give my reaction to the sad happenings in the country If the Government think that as a prisoner I have no right to ad-

dress such communications they have but to say so
and I will not repeat the mistake

M K GANDHI

NOTE A formal acknowledgment was sent to this
letter

**Personal Correspondence Between Mahatma Gandhi
and Lord Linlithgow.**

New Year's Eve, 1942

(Personal)

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the biblical injunction I have allowed many sins to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you but I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is rankling in my breast against you. I had thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However, what has happened since the 9th of August last, makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend. I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any other occupant of your *gadi* as with you.

Your arrest of me, the communique you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefor, Mr. Amery's attack on me and much else I can catalogue to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my bona fides. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend, why did you not before taking drastic action send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts? I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me but in this case I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth. I have so much fallen from grace that I could not esta-

blish contact with a dying friend, I mean Prof Bhan-sali, who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair and I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust these reports. I could write much more but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure that what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details.

You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread Truth and Non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of Satyagraha knows no defeat. Prisons is one of the many ways of spreading the message but it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the latter purely as a matter of duty never as a pleasure in the hope that some day those that have the power will realise that they have wronged innocent men. I have given myself six months. The period is drawing to a close, so is my patience. The law of Satyagraha, as I know it, prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence it is 'crucify the flesh by fasting'. The same law forbids its use except as a last resort. I do not want to use it if I can avoid it. This is the way to avoid it. Convince me of my error or errors and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send anyone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will. May I expect an early reply?

May the New Year bring peace to us all.

I am your sincere friend,
M K GANDHI

frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you (and unhappily while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as lawbreakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims)

3 But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay, in what respect I have done so and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me

You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight, and to approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feeling and your motives

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW

(Personal)

January 19, 1943

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I received your kind letter of 13th instant yesterday at 2-30 pm. I had almost despaired of ever hearing from you. Please excuse my impatience.

Your letter gladdens me to find that I have not lost caste with you.

My letter of 31st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter-growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which, in your opinion, I was guilty.

The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have re-read my letter in the light of your interpretation but I have failed to find

your meaning in it I wanted to fast and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is going on in the country including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land

If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion This I might be able to do only if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress

If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evident I should need to consult nobody so far as my own action is concerned to make a full and open confession and make ample amends But I have not any conviction of error I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India of 21st September, 1942 I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to you of 14th August 1942

Of course I deplore the happenings which have taken place since 9th August last But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India?

Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads But you will not expect me to do so Such reports have before now often proved fallible It was for that reason that in my letter of 31st December I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make

This, however, I can say from the housetop that I am as confirmed a believer in Non-violence as I have ever been You may know that any violence on the part of Congress workers I have condemned openly and unequivocally I have even done public penance

more than once I must not worry you with examples
 'THE POINT I WISH TO MAKE IS THAT ON EVERY
 SUCH OCCASION I WAS A FREE MAN

This time the retracing as I have submitted lies
 with the Government You will forgive me for ex-
 pressing an opinion challenging yours I am certain
 that nothing but good would have resulted if you had
 stayed your hand and granted me the interview which
 I had announced on the night of the 8th August I was
 to seek But that was not to be

Here, may I remind you that the Government of
 India have before now owned their mistakes as for
 instance in the Punjab when the late General Dyer
 was condemned, in the United Provinces, when a cor-
 ner of a mosque in Cawnpore was restored, and in
 Bengal when the partition was annulled

All these things were done in spite of great and
 previous mob violence

To sum up

(1) If you want me to act singly, convince me
 that I was wrong I will make ample amends

(2) If you want me to make any proposal on be-
 half of the Congress, you should put me among the
 Congress Working Committee members I do plead
 with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

If I am obscure or have not answered your letter
 fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make
 an attempt to give you satisfaction

I have no mental reservation

I find that my letters to you are sent through the
 Government of Bombay This procedure must involve
 some loss of time As time is of the essence in this
 matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my
 letters to you may be sent directly by the Superin-
 tendent of this camp ,

I am,
 Your sincere friend
 M K GANDHI

(Personal)

January 25, 1943.

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Many thanks for your personal letter of the 19th January which I have just received and which I need not say I have read with close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that, however, reluctantly, the course of events and my familiarity with what has been taking place has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement and you as its authorised and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm and so much injury to India's credit since last August. I note what you say about Non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months and even the events that are happening today show that it has not met with the full support of certain at any rate of your followers and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters. And I cannot, I fear, accept as an answer your suggestion that the whole blame has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

2 If, therefore, you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of the 9th August and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurance as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is, of course, very necessary to be clear on that point, and you will not, I know, take it amiss that I should make that clear in the plainest possible words

3 I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him which will I trust reduce delay in its transmission

Yours sincerely,
J. LINLITHGOW

January 29, 1943

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of 19th instant. I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath, that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold that the August resolution of the Congress, is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on 9th August last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrest of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence?

You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape and form. It tends co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide co-operation possible. Is all this opinion to reproach?

The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August resolution asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting M. A. Jinnah to form a National Government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected Assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated Civil Disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of Civil Disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". Even that Civil Disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting of which I was to seek from you an appointment.

Then, take the unproved and, in my opinion, unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

Surely I can say with safety that it is for Government to justify their action by solid evidence not by mere *Iipse Dixit*.

But you throw in my face the fact of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic Law of 'tooth for tooth' by that of ten thousand for one, not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic Law, i.e., of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot

interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India

Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a *bona fide* National Government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning of the 9th February (later changed to February 10) a fast for 21 days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But now-a-days my system refuses water. This time therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable, for my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. This fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

I am not marking this letter personal as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were a mere personal appeal.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M K GANDHI

February 5th, 1943

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Many thanks for your letter of 29th January which I have just received. I have read it as always, with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement and you as its authorised and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as

responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request were it not that your letters have no indication, such as I should have been entitled to expect that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter on the basis of the same information you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or ever desire me to convince you of anything. But in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress resolution of the 8th August declared a 'Mass Struggle' in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorised all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that followed it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence, and that you were prepared to condone it, and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on 15th September last, and if you need further information I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the masses of evidence that has since come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I

have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee that well-known Congressmen have organised and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder, and that even now an underground Congress organisation exists in which among others, the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information and make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe, but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgment will go against you by default.

3 I have read with some surprise your statement that the principle of Civil Disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi settlement on the 5th March, 1931 which you refer to as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". I have again looked at that document. Its basis was that Civil Disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain 'reciprocal action' would be taken by Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of Civil Disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that Civil Disobedience was recognised as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

4 To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorised Government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged, that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruption of communications for attacks on

innocent persons for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has, throughout, been to give you, and to give the Congress organisation, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of the 14th July, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation and that after all it was an open rebellion, are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to 'DO OR DIE'. But with a patience that was, perhaps, misplaced it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

5 Let me, in conclusion, say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and your age, the decision that you tell me that you now have it in mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risk is clearly one that must be taken by you alone and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution, and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (Humsa) for which there can be no moral justification, and understood from your own previous writings that this was also your view.

Yours sincerely,

LINTJH GOW

February 7, 1943

Dear Lord Lamlithgow,

I have to thank you for your long reply dated the 5th February last. I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on 9th instant. Your letter, from a Satyagrahi's standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step and its consequences will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph you describe the step as an attempt "to find an easy way out." That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as "a form of political blackmail." And you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

I do claim that I have approached you with an open mind when I asked you to convince me of my error. "Profound distrust" of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

You say that there is evidence that I—leave my friends out for the moment—'expected this policy to lead to violence,' that I was, "prepared to condone it," and that "the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders." I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely there is nothing wrong in my asking you to show me

the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of English jurisprudence.

If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in "planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism," she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?

I reiterate the statement that the principle of Civil Disobedience is implicitly conceded in the settlement of 5th March, 1931 arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that settlement. Civil Disobedience was discontinued only on conditions being fulfilled by the Government. That by itself was, in my opinion an acknowledgement of its legitimacy, of course under given circumstances. It therefore seems somewhat strange to find you maintaining that Civil Disobedience "cannot be recognised as being in any circumstances legitimate" by your Government. You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognised this legitimacy under the name of "Passive Resistance."

Lastly you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration in one of them, of adherence to unadulterated Non-violence, for, you say in your letter under reply that "acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the author-

ised Government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order should allow movements to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others to proceed unchecked" I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful

I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and statements attributed to me. This is not the place nor the time for such a reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before myself. I begin it on the 9th instant (changed to 10th) with the clearest possible conscience.

Despite your description of it as "a form of political blackmail," it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the highest tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the judgment seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI.

Letters between the Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, and Mahatma Gandhi.

7-2-1943.

Dear Mr Gandhi,

The Government of India has been informed by His Excellency the Viceroy of your intention, as communicated to him, of undertaking a fast for 21 days in certain circumstances. They have carefully considered the position and the conclusions that they have

reached in the light of such consideration are set out in the statement of which a copy is enclosed which they would propose in the event of your maintaining your present intention to release in due course to the press

2 The Government of India, as you will see from their statement would be very reluctant to see you fast and I am instructed to inform you that as the statement makes clear, they would propose that should you persist in your intention you will be set at liberty for the purpose, and for the duration of your fast, as from the time of its commencement During the period of your fast, there will be no objection to your proceeding where you wish, though the Government of India trust that you will be able to arrange for your accommodation away from the Aga Khan's Palace

3 Should you, for any reason find yourself unable to take advantage of these arrangements, a decision which the Government of India would greatly regret, they will, of course, suitably amend the statement of which a copy is now enclosed before it issues But they wish me to repeat with all earnestness their anxiety and their hope that the considerations which have carried so much weight with them will equally carry weight with you and that you will not pursue your present tentative proposal In that event no occasion will of course arise for the issue of any statement of any kind

Yours sincerely,
R TOLLERNHAM,
Additional Secretary to the
Government of India.

February, 8, 1943

Dear Sir Richard,

I have very carefully studied your letter I am sorry to say that there is nothing in the correspondence, which has taken place between His Excellency and myself, or your letter, to warrant a recalling of my intention of fast I have mentioned in my letters

to H E the conditions which can induce prevention or suspension of the step

If the temporary release is offered for my convenience I do not need it I shall be quite content to take my fast as a detenu or prisoner If it is for the convenience of the Government, I am sorry I am unable to suit them, much as I should like to do so I can say this much that I, as a prisoner, shall avoid, as far as humanly possible every cause of inconvenience to the Government, save what is inherent in the fast itself. The impending fast has not been conceived to be taken as a free man Circumstances may arise, as they have done before now, when I may have to fast as a free man If, therefore, I am released there will be no fast in terms of my correspondence abovementioned I shall have to survey the situation *de novo* and decide what I should do I have no desire to be released under false pretences In spite of all that has been said against me, I hope not to belie the vow of Truth and Non-violence which alone makes life liveable for me. I say this, if it is only for my own satisfaction It does me good to reiterate openly my faith, when outer darkness surrounds me as it does just now

I must not hustle the Government into a decision on this letter I understand that your letter has been dictated through the telephone In order to give the Government enough time I shall suspend the fast, if necessary to Wednesday next, 10th instant

So far as the statement proposed to be issued by the Government is concerned and of which you have favoured me with a copy, I must say that it does me an injustice The proper course would be to publish the full correspondence and let the public judge for themselves

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

February 9, 1943

Dear Mr Gandhi,

I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 8th February, 1943, which has been laid before the Governor-General-in-Council. The Government of India noted your decision with great regret. The position remains the same, that is to say, they are ready to set you at liberty for the purpose and duration of your fast. But if you are not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if you fast while in detention, you will do so solely on your own responsibility and at your own risk. In that event, you will be at liberty to have your own medical attendants and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period. Suitable drafting alterations will be made in the statement which the Government of India would, in that event, issue to the press.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S FAST

True to his word Mahatma Gandhi commenced his fast on Wednesday February 10, 1943. This fast threw the first ray of publicity on the Aga Khan Palace wherein Mahatmaji was incarcerated. Till then rumour had informed the public of the place of detention both of Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. During the fast it became authentic information. People were informed that the Ahmednagar Fort had the privilege of housing the Congress President and the Working Committee. The fast went through three weeks although Gandhiji had thrown in his letters to the Viceroy the hint that he might terminate it earlier if it became absolutely necessary for saving his life. For he did not want to die. But a man of unfaltering determination, that he is known to be, Mahatmaji went through the full period of 21 days and survived the ordeal.

These twenty-one days were a period of the most intense anxiety throughout India. Even people outside India felt concerned. Every well-wisher of Britain said that irreparable injury would be done to Indo-British relations if the worst happened and Mahatmaji left this world. Non-Official Europeans in India joined Indians in their prayers for Mahatmaji's life. People in India were stirred as never before. Almost daily prayer meetings were held in a solemn and surcharged atmosphere in every nook and corner of the country. Three days during these three weeks were the most anxious days.

Mr William Phillips, Personal Representative of President Roosevelt in India, issued a statement that "phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by high officials of the Governments of the United States and Great Britain," though it was subsequently found that this handling came to nothing. The Government of India did however, feel that it was necessary to put their case before the bar of the international opinion and an indictment of the Congress was published by the Home Department. It is generally mentioned as Tottenham's handiwork because the Preface is signed by him. Its title is "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43". The Preface is worth reproduction because it proves that even Churchill felt that the British Government was put on the defence.

Preface

In response to demands which have reached Government from several sources Government have now prepared a review which brings together a number of facts, whether derived from official documents or otherwise, bearing on the responsibility of Mr Gandhi and the Congress High Command for the disturbances which followed the sanctioning of the mass movement by the A-I C C on August 8th, 1942. Almost all the facts presented in this review are or should be already within the knowledge of the public. The review does not purport to disclose all the information in the possession of the Government. In addition to

the facts here stated, there is a large volume of evidence which it is undesirable to publish at present

New Delhi,
13th February, 1943

R Tottenham,
Additional Secreary to
the Government of India, Home Dept.

It may be mentioned here that the said 'large volume of evidence' was never published Mahatma Gandhi's reply to this indictment is published hereafter

On 15th February an unsuccessful attempt was made in the Council of State to condemn the Government All the elected Indian members of all faiths supported the adjournment motion but the composition of that Chamber makes it impossible for such an attempt to succeed A similar attempt was also made in the Assembly and in the absence of the Congress Party met with failure As a protest against the attitude of the Government of India displayed in the Legislative Chambers, three Members of the Executive Council, viz, Sir H P Mody, Mr N R Sarkar and Mr M S Aney, resigned and the acceptance of their resignations was announced on February 17. On February 18 the question was raised in the House of Commons Mr Amery was asked if as a possible contribution towards the ending of the deadlock in India he would allow influential non-party men to confer with Mahatma Gandhi He replied —

"I am content to leave the question of interviews with Mr Gandhi to the discretion of the Government of India"

Labourite Sorensen asked

"Does not Mr Amery realise that a new situation has been created by the resignation of three members of the Viceroy's Council, and in view of that fact, could he not make some suggestion to the Viceroy that these contacts as suggested should be allowed?"

Mr Amery answered. "No, Sir"

On February 19 a conference of non-party Leaders was held at 28, Feroz Shah Road, New Delhi, in a tense

atmosphere The following Resolution was passed unanimously —

“This Conference, representing different creeds, communities and interests in India, gives expression to the universal desire of the people of this country that, in the interest of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally This Conference views with the gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe This Conference, therefore, urges the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi”

Among those who supported this Resolution, were Sir Suleiman Cassum Mitha, Sir Abdul Halim Guznawi, Maulana Ahmed Sayeed Saheb, Mr Zahiruddin, Mr Humayun Kabir and Dr Mackenzie The Resolution was submitted to the Governor-General by the President, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who received the following reply from the Private Secretary

New Delhi, 20th Feb 1943

Dear Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,

His Excellency asks me to say that he has received and considered the Resolution adopted by the Conference under your Chairmanship, of which you were good enough to send him a copy today The attitude of the Government of India in the matter of Mr Gandhi's fast is set out clearly and in detail in the *communiqué* which they issued on February 10, a copy of which I enclose for convenience of reference No new factor has emerged since that date, and as the Government of India's *communiqué* brings out clearly, responsibility in connection with his fast rests solely with Mr Gandhi, with whom and not with the Government, the decision to bring it to an end must rest

Yours sincerely,
J G Laithwaite

CABLE TO MR CHURCHILL

New Delhi, February 21

The following is the text of the cable addressed by leading members of the Conference headed by Sir Tej Bahadur Saprū on February 21 to the British Prime Minister, Mr Arthur Greenwood, Leader of the Opposition, and Sir Percy Harris, Leader of the Liberal Party —

"Three hundred public men from different parts of India, representing various communities, creeds and interests, including Commerce and Industry, Landed Interests, Workers Communists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and British Missionaries, met yesterday at New Delhi and unanimously passed a resolution urging immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi whose condition is fast approaching a crisis. We fear that unless immediately released he will pass away. We wish to explain to British public opinion that the Mahatma is fasting only to be able to review the situation as a free man and to advise the people accordingly and not on the issue of independence. We are convinced that the terms of his letter of September 23 recently published by the Government amount to an unequivocal disapproval on behalf of himself and the Congress of all acts of violence. The Chairman of the Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Saprū, submitted the Resolution to the Viceroy yesterday afternoon and immediately afterwards he received a reply from the Viceroy declining to interfere as no new factor had arisen to alter the previous decision and enclosing the official communication of February 10. We deeply deplore that the advice of so many representative and responsible men should have been summarily turned down by the Viceroy.

"We firmly believe that if the Mahatma's life is spared a way will be opened to the promotion of peace and goodwill as surely as his death as a British prisoner will intensify public embitterment. The charges brought by the Government against the Mahatma do

not rest upon an examination by any impartial Tribunal or independent body of men. We firmly believe that much of the trouble which has arisen was preventable by timely action on the part of Government last summer and that the Mahatma should have been allowed to see the Viceroy to find a solution as he desired.

"Millions of our countrymen feel that the responsibility for saving the Mahatma's life rests only with the Government. We, therefore, urge that the Mahatma should be forthwith released. As under the existing constitution the ultimate responsibility is of the British Parliament for the peace and tranquillity of India, we request that this cable may be brought to its notice in order that it may do justice in the matter. We are convinced that wise and liberal statesmanship will solve the Indo-British problem more speedily and effectively than stern repression.

The Committee of the Conference met and authorised the President to carry on further correspondence with the Viceroy if necessary and to call a meeting of the Committee when an occasion arose. It also explained "that the Conference is left with no alternative but to appeal to the highest tribunal of the Empire, viz, Parliament and Britain's national leaders."

MR. CHURCHILL'S REPLY

London, February 22, 1943

The Government of India decided last August that Mr. Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood. The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist and his Majesty's Government endorse the determination of the Government of India not to be deflected from their duty towards the peoples of India and of the United Nations by Mr. Gandhi's attempt to secure his unconditional release by fasting.

The first duty of the Government of India and of His Majesty's Government is to defend the soil of India from invasion by which it is still menaced, and to enable India to play her part in the general cause of the United Nations. There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility, therefore, rests entirely with Mr Gandhi himself.

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

London, February 25, 1943

The Secretary of State for India, Mr Amery, answering questions in the Commons today said that the British Government entirely agreed with the decision of the Government of India not to yield to Mr Gandhi's efforts to enforce his unconditional release.

Mr Amery said "The circumstances in which the Government of India found it necessary to detain the Congress leaders are well known. The correspondence between Mr Gandhi and the Viceroy preceding Mr Gandhi's fast has been published. It contains no indication that Mr Gandhi sees cause for regret in the outbreaks of murder, violence and sabotage which followed the authorisation in August last by the Congress party of a mass struggle. By rejecting the offer of the Government of India to release him for the period of his fast and declaring that his fast would be unnecessary if he were released, Mr Gandhi has also made it clear that the object of the fast is simply to enforce his unconditional release.

"The Government of India, composed, when the decision was taken, of nine Indian and four European members, including the Viceroy, decided that they would not yield to this threat (Cheers). His Majesty's Government are in entire agreement with their decision. India has a vital part to play in the general cause of the United Nations. She is still herself menaced by invasion. There can be no justification for the release of men who deliberately planned to paralyse India's defence at a most critical moment (Cheers), and who have shown no sign of

abandoning their criminal purpose, nor is there any reason in this respect for discrimination between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Subject to their general decision, the Government of India have wished to show Mr Gandhi every consideration. He has at the Aga Khan Palace his own medical attendants as well as those provided by the Government and is allowed, subject to their advice and to Government's permission, to receive visitors."

There were protests and some interruption when Mr Sorenson (Labour) asked for an early debate "in view of the very real concern in some parts of the Commons and the country." Mr Amery replied that that was a question for the Leader of the House to deal with.

Replying to a suggestion that the situation might be eased if Mahatma Gandhi were placed among the interned leaders of the Congress Working Committee, Mr Amery amid cheers, said "I leave that to the judgment of the Government of India."

Mr Shinwell requested Mr Amery to produce evidence supporting the implication in his statement that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for the outbreak of violence.

Mr Amery: A good deal has been produced, but fuller matter is 'en route' from India and will be published on arrival.

There were cries of "No" when Labourite Kirkwood suggested that Mahatma Gandhi's unconditional release would be a sign of strength, not weakness.

Mr Mander (Liberal) asked if Indian leaders had appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to abandon his fast in public interest.

Mr Nicholson (Conservative) said that the Government of India was earning universal respect by recognition of its primary duty—maintenance of conditions under which the masses of Indians could lead orderly, normal lives.

Mr Amery made no reply to these further points.

Mr Sorenson questioned Mr Amery regarding the letter stated to have been sent by Mahatma Gandhi to the Secretary of State. Mr Amery replied "The whole correspondence which passed between Mr Gandhi and the

Viceroy and the Government of India has been given to the Press. No letter was addressed to me by Mr Gandhi. The Government of India's statement on Congress responsibility for the disturbances will likewise be given full publicity as soon as it is received here."

Mr Sorenson said that Mahatma Gandhi had referred to such a letter, and asked Mr Amery to inquire why he never received it.

Mr Amery: I have no doubt if a letter had been addressed to me by Mr Gandhi and sent to the Government of India it would have reached me.

Later the Leader of the House, Mr Eden, rejected a request by the Labour Leader, Mr Greenwood, for an early debate on India. Mr Eden said: "The Government's view is that in the present state of affairs respecting Mr Gandhi's fast a debate would serve no useful purpose, indeed rather the reverse. But of course we will review the situation as it develops."

Independent Labourite Maxton asked if it would not be better to debate the situation before any tragedy happened rather than afterwards.

Mr Eden: I did carefully consider the reply I have given. It is the Government's considered view that no useful purpose would be served by a debate at present.

BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

London, February 25, 1943

Prayers for all who really hold responsibility at this time here and in India, including the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, the Secretary of State, Mr Amery, the High Commissioner for India, Sir Azizul Haque, the Parliament and "for all those devoted to the service of India," and especially for Mr Mohandas Gandhi, were offered by the Lord Bishop of Southwark, Rev Simpson, at the well-known Church at Martin-on-Fields here today.

The minister of the church, Reverend Harborough, said: "We are met today in this time of great perplexity that by prayer we may co-operate with God in the working out of His great purposes of good for the peoples of

India and Britain—peoples who have been strangely joined in partnership” Others who took part in the prayers for intercession were Reverend J S Whale, Reverend W E S Holland and Reverend William Paton

Reverend Paton said “Let us think of the whole people of India, and seek God’s blessing for the guidance of India at this time”

Lady Cripps, Mr P K Dutt, representing the High Commissioner for India, and Mr Cail Heath were among those who attended the prayer service held at the Church.

MR. DEWITT MACKENZIE

(Was Correspondent of the “Associated Press of America”)

NEW YORK, February, 25, 1943

Mr Dewitt Mackenzie, who has recently returned from India, writing in the ‘Sun’ points out the consequences should Mahatma Gandhi die as a prisoner and urges his release He says that he is convinced that negotiations could then be resumed and a satisfactory compromise reached Mr Mackenzie thinks that in his opinion it is up to the Government to take the first step

DIARY OF THE FAST

AGA KHAN PALACE, Yeravda

This three weeks’ Fast was Mahatmaji’s 13th fast and the fifth major fast He was in his 74th year In the words of Dr B C Roy ‘he was very near death’ during these three weeks

The fast began on 10th February From the fourth day of the fast the Government of Bombay issued daily *communiques* on Mahatma Gandhi’s health Dr B C Roy arrived on Feb 15 The health bulletins tell their own tale

February 13

Although Mr Gandhi has had some trouble with nausea and in consequence disturbed sleep his general condition is as satisfactory as can be expected on the fourth day of his Fast

February 14

Mr Gandhi continues to be troubled with nausea and broken sleep and his condition is not so satisfactory as yesterday

February 15

Mr Gandhi has found some difficulty in taking water and had a rather restless day yesterday (Sunday) His condition has shown some deterioration

February 16

During the past 24 hours, Mr Gandhi's condition has further deteriorated

February 17

Mr Gandhi had a better day on the whole on Tuesday, but his general condition continues to cause anxiety

[From February 18 onwards, the *communiqués* were signed by Dr B C Roy, Dr M D D Gilder, Major-General R H Candy, Lt-Col M G Bhandari, Dr Sushila Nayar and Lt-Col B Z Shah]

February 18

Although Mr Gandhi had a total of nine hours' sleep, he is not refreshed nor mentally alert There is other evidence of uraemia which is progressive The heart action is feeble Anxiety as to his condition deepens

February 19

Mr Gandhi's sleep was broken, as he was troubled by excessive salivation Nevertheless, he is a little more interested in his surroundings today There is little change in the general condition except increasing weakness

Dr B C Roy, Dr M D D Gilder and Dr (Miss) S Nayar have requested the Government to publish the following

"Mahatmaji's condition continues weak and causes anxiety We would request those interested in his welfare not to tax his strength further by seeking interviews at present, which must naturally be restricted as much as possible"

The Government doctors in attendance concur in the above advice

February 20

Mr Gandhi's condition has changed considerably for the worse. His condition is very grave.

February 21

Mr Gandhi had a bad day yesterday and only four and a half hours' sleep at night. During the day he is apathetic and at times drowsy. Heart sounds are weak and volume of the pulse small. He is extremely weak so that even the swallowing of water exhausts him. He drank forty ounces of water mixed with two ounces of sour lime juice as usual. He is too weak to be weighed, but had lost fourteen pounds up to the 19th instant.

The uraemic condition deepens and, if the fast is not ended without delay, it may be too late to save his life.

February 22

After a restless day, on February 21, Mr Gandhi entered a crisis at 4 p.m. He was seized with severe nausea and almost fainted, and the pulse became nearly imperceptible. Later, he was able to take water with sweet lime juice. He rallied from the crisis and slept for about five and a half hours during the night.

Today is his day of silence. He appears to be comfortable and is more cheerful. The heart is weaker.

February 23

Mr Gandhi had only broken sleep during the night, but has dozed off and on during the day. He appears comfortable. There is no appreciable change to record.

February 24

Mr Gandhi's general condition shows a slight improvement. The uraemic symptoms are less prominent. He is cheerful and his strength shows no further deterioration.

February 25

Mr Gandhi has made no further progress. There is no appreciable change in his condition.

Following the crisis on Sunday the 21st nausea compelled him to drink sweet lime juice and water. This was continued on Monday and Tuesday and good results were manifested. Yesterday he reduced the quantity consi-

derably as he wishes to take the minimum quantity, enabling him to drink water

February 26

Mr Gandhi's condition shows no appreciable change
He is cheerful

February 27

There is very little change in Mr Gandhi's condition
He is somewhat apathetic and not quite so cheerful

February 28

Mr Gandhi's general condition shows improvement
He is alert and in good spirits

March 1

Today is Mr Gandhi's day of silence His strength is maintained and he is in good spirits He is easily tired by visitors

March 2

There is no change in Mr Gandhi's condition He is in good spirits

March 3

After prayers Mr Gandhi broke his fast at 9-30 this morning with orange juice slightly diluted with water He showed signs of strain He is weak, but cheerful

[Daily medical bulletins were continued for three more days after the Fast under the signatures of Dr M D D Gilder, Lt-Col M G Bahndari, Dr Sushila Nayal and Lt-Col B Z Shah]

March 4

After breaking his Fast, Mr Gandhi took orange juice, honey and water during the day He slept well and is cheerful

March 5

Mr Gandhi's condition is satisfactory He is cheerful

March 6

Yesterday Mr Gandhi took diluted goat's milk and fruit juices and some fruit pulp His progress is satisfactory

The Bombay Government *communique* issued on this day added "Accepting the view of these doctors, no further bulletin will be published unless it is considered necessary"

THE "MIRACLE" HAS HAPPENED

POONA, March 3, 1943

"The miracle has happened Gandhi lives in spite of the Fast, the doctors and their fears, in spite of his age and the defective organs," said Dr B C Roy just after returning from the ceremony of breaking of the Fast

"Full control of the mind over the body and strong determination to live for which he fought every inch of the ground—this is how Gandhi could tide over the crisis that threatened his life at one stage of the fast," said Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, in an interview to the Press

Dr Roy said "Gandhi helped his doctors so far as elimination was concerned He tried to take as much water as possible—plain water and water mixed with salts or with sweet lime juice, which also contained salt The quantity was varied by him He only took just the minimum quantity necessary to make water palatable That the amount of juice did not alter the state of the fast was a definitely proved fact Gandhi's urine and blood examinations continued to show presence of waste products which in normal persons might cause uraemia ending in coma and death In the world of today physical organs of the body get more and more under control of the mind Many of the physical functions like hunger and thirst, different types of secretions and excretions are being brought more and more under the control of higher centres That is why the modern man is so complex as compared to the village man of olden days In the case of Mahatma Gandhi, partly as a result of forces operating in all of us and partly as a result of self-discipline by which he has deliberately brought physical functions of different organs of his body as being more and more directed by the central nervous system Therefore, our forecasts proved to be erroneous We could only depend upon the law of averages and could only give our opinion on the basis of what could happen to an average man under similar conditions "

Dr Roy added "He must now be looked after like a child "

THE STORY OF THE SWEET LIML

The following statement was issued by Mr Devadas Gandhi after his final meeting with Mahatma Gandhi on March 8 —

My brother and I paid our good-bye visit to Gandhiji on Saturday the 6th. We had been spending about an hour and a half by his bedside each day since the end of the Fast. The widely published report that I spent a few hours with Gandhiji on Friday is totally incorrect. I wish it had been possible to visit him for a few more days during his convalescence, more particularly because the visits were a great comfort to my mother, whose growing infirmity of mind and body has become painful and alarming to watch. I think Gandhiji is now well on the way to recovery. He is expected to take another fortnight to be able to get out of bed. But one is thankful now to be able to look back with relief upon these four weeks of history. I do not wish to attempt a public assessment of the results of the fast. I am content, along with the rest, to let the future unfold itself. But there are a good few legends. I shall here refer to two of them. It has been reported in the Press that Gandhiji had a heavy mail-bag during the Fast. Actually no mail-bag, heavy or light, made its appearance at the Aga Khan Palace. They will only reach him in due course, if at all, as he is still a prisoner. Then there is the sweet lime juice story. I do not exactly know the fruit called 'sweet lime'. But a foreign correspondent very naturally asked me whether he would be right in drawing the inference that something sweet like honey or glucose had been added to the juice. To my knowledge the plain word 'orange' is used in English to mean both 'mosambi' and 'santra'. And it was 'mosambi' juice, miscalled sweet lime juice, that was added in minute quantities to the water with no admixture of anything else. The change from lemon juice to orange juice was made, in accordance with the terms of the Fast, when for two days it had become impossible for Gandhiji to drink water and it took him five minutes to gulp one ounce of water. I believe he took an average

of less than six ounces of juice mixed in 60 ounces of water per day during the Fast

PHILLIPS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE GANDHI

NEW DELHI, April 25, 1943

In reply to a question whether he made an effort to meet Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, Mr Phillips, President Roosevelt's Personal Representative in India, said

"I should like to have met and talked with Mr Gandhi I requested the appropriate authorities for permission to do so and was informed that they were unable to grant the necessary facilities"

NO CONTACT WITH GANDHI

Press communique

NEW DELHI, April, 1, 1943

The text of the memorandum submitted to his Excellency the Viceroy by the deputation from the Leaders' Conference, consisting of Mr C Rajagopalachari, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Pandit H N Kunzru, Mr N M. Joshi and Mr K M Munshi, together with the text of His Excellency's reply, is released for information

The deputation asked His Excellency to accept their statement, with certain additions which they had incorporated in it, as officially presented to him with a view to its publication with the Viceroy's reply, and to dispense with their personal attendance His Excellency readily agreed to this request The deputation did not eventually see the Viceroy

The following is the text of the memorandum —

We are submitting this memorandum in accordance with His Excellency's desire that he should have a written statement precisely explaining what we wish to say to which His Excellency proposes to give a written reply While we do so, we hope that the helpful spirit in which we approach this matter also ani-

mates His Excellency and that it is with a completely open mind that he will receive the deputation.

2 We are glad that His Excellency has found the resolution of the Bombay Conference of March 9 and 10 perfectly clear. We have therein expressed a desire that His Excellency should permit a few of us to meet Gandhiji, who is under detention, to ascertain authoritatively his reactions to the events which have happened since his arrest and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation. If His Excellency has no objection to this, we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity and discuss matters with Gandhiji. We will then go to His Excellency again and place our proposals before him. In case His Excellency has any objections to following this course, we should like to be informed of the objections so that we may try to answer them, and for this purpose we desire an interview with His Excellency.

3 We have carefully read the correspondence which has passed between His Excellency and Gandhiji and which has been published. We feel that Gandhiji has already expressed his disapproval of violence and sabotage, and we have no doubt that he will cast his influence on the side of internal harmony and reconciliation.

4 The correspondence and statements published in connection with the fast have themselves discouraged the disturbances and the contemplated meeting with Gandhiji will, in our view, further the same object.

5 We feel that though order might have been restored on the surface, every day that passes without a solution of the Indian problem intensifies the hostility between Britain and India, and renders any future solution more and more difficult to attain, until we apprehend it may become even impossible.

We are convinced that Gandhiji's assistance is essential for the restoration of goodwill and for a solution of the problem even for the interim period, including an adjustment of Hindu-Muslim claims. On

the other hand, unpleasant as it is, we cannot help feeling that refusing to permit us to have any contact with Gandhiji now would be equivalent to a determination on the part of Great Britain that there should be no attempt at a settlement of the problem and no reconciliation between Nationalist India and Britain. Whatever may be the immediate administrative convenience thereof, we hope that His Excellency will not take up this attitude.

We feel that though there is no present danger of Axis aggression in India, the strained relation between Government and the people is fraught with grave evil and all that is possible should be done to replace it by a better feeling.

As the war is getting long-drawn out, measures to solve the economic problems arising out of it as well as plans for increasing production of food and other essential articles and improving transport and distribution as well as measures of control have to be evolved. Such measures can be organised and regulated only by a national administration or a government that can reasonably claim to approach that character and is in a position to justify policies adopted from time to time although they may involve considerable hardships on all sections of the people.

The situation is growing more and more serious every day and we feel that a government commanding the loyal and affectionate co-operation of all the people can be constituted for the period of the war only if we are permitted to talk with Gandhiji, consult him and obtain his support.

The request that we make is intended to achieve this object. It cannot hurt the Government or the war effort in the least and in our view is likely to lead to constructive results.

THE VICEROY'S REPLY

I am greatly obliged to you for the expression of your views which you have been kind enough to let

me have, and for giving me the opportunity of considering it in advance. The matter is one of great importance, and I am anxious that there should be no misunderstanding in relation to it. I made clear in my correspondence with Shri Tej Bahadur Sapru my readiness that your deputation should in their statement amplify or emphasize any particular points in the Bombay Resolution to which they attached importance and indicate the arguments on which they based their suggestions. I am indebted to you for the memorandum you have let me have, though it is with regret that I do not find in it any fresh argument in support of the suggestions which the Leaders' Conference has put forward and that I do not find that unequivocal condemnation of the Congress campaign of violence which the public and I, are entitled to expect from you is representing that Conference.

Let me before I proceed to your specific proposals mention, though in no spirit of criticism, that I observe from the list of signatories that the great Muslim community was practically unrepresented at the Conference of Leaders, and that that body contained no representative of the Scheduled Castes and no one in a position to speak for the Indian States. I observe also that the Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha dissociated himself from the resolution passed by the Conference, while organised parties such as the Muslim League were not represented at its deliberations. I am, however, I need not say, at all times glad to hear the views of persons prominent in the public life of this country on the political issues of the day, and to give all attention to any representation that they may make to me.

The specific proposal that you ask me to consider is that permission should be given for certain persons to meet Mr. Gandhi in detention to ascertain authoritatively his reaction to the events that have happened since his arrest, and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation. You feel, you tell me, that Mr. Gandhi has already expressed in the correspond-

ence that has passed between him and me his disapproval of violence and sabotage, and you add that you have no doubt that he will cast his influence on the side of internal harmony and reconciliation. And you urge that if the permission for which you have asked is not given to you the action of Government will unquestionably be interpreted as meaning that they do not wish to see reconciliation.

Let me remind you first of the salient facts in the position. Mr Gandhi and the leaders of the Congress Party, after a long preliminary campaign of incitement, were finally placed under restraint last August. At the time when they were placed under restraint Mr Gandhi had urged open rebellion, had adjured his followers to "do or die", had made it clear that there was "no room left for withdrawal or negotiation", and had both directly and indirectly by his speeches and writings contributed actively to foment that sad disastrous series of events that disfigured the face of India during the autumn and winter of last year. He and the Congress Party had been given every opportunity to reconsider their position. My Government and I had exposed ourselves to the charge that we ought to have taken action against them much earlier, and that we ought not to have allowed this campaign of violence and sabotage to develop. But our forbearance met with no reward, and we were left with no option in the interests of the security of India, and her defence against Japan and against the other Axis Powers, but to take the action that was taken last August.

Unhappily the arrest of the leaders did not prevent a shocking campaign of organised violence and crime for which preparations had been made before those arrests took place. The paper published by the Government of India clearly indicates the full responsibility of the Congress and of Mr Gandhi for that campaign. The encouragement which it gave while it lasted to the Axis Powers needs no emphasis. Its effect on the war effort was severe. It resulted in

most material damage to communications and to public and private properties, and in the murder of many innocent persons who had no concern with, or interest in, the political issues involved

Despite the fact that Mr Gandhi and the Working Committee have had full access to reliable accounts in the Press since August last, there has never been any condemnation of those activities by them. They have not dissociated themselves from the Resolution of last August from which so many of these evils flowed. Mr Gandhi's advice to "do or die" still stands on record and while order has been restored, and the rebellion put down, no one can suggest that the country did not pass through a period of grave danger and that while the Congress creed remains what it is, we would again be exposed to that danger if the Congress and its leaders are again given full liberty of action.

You mention that you have seen the correspondence that has passed between me and Mr Gandhi. I would draw your attention to one most important point. I put it to Mr Gandhi in terms (for I thought that must be his intention) that if I was right in thinking that he wished to go back on the Resolution of last August, to condemn what had taken place and to give suitable assurance for the future, I would be very ready to consider the matter further. His reply made it quite clear that I had misunderstood him and that that was not his wish, and matters stand at that point.

Thereafter during the time of Mr Gandhi's fast there was the fullest opportunity for certain of his trusted friends to make contact with him and many indeed of those who were present at the Conference in Bombay had the opportunity of seeing him. Mr Gandhi, had he so wished, could then, as he could have during the time preceding his fast, or today, have repudiated the violence for which the Congress was responsible, could have indicated his readiness to resile from the Congress Resolution of August last,

and could have given assurances for the future. But nothing whatever positive has emerged as a result of those contacts any more than from the correspondence that passed between Mr. Gandhi and myself, and I have no reason to believe that Mr. Gandhi is any more ready now than he was at an earlier stage to repudiate the policy as the result of which the Congress leaders are at present under detention.

Now, Gentlemen, I have done my very best in the time that I have been in this country to try to improve relations and to try to get the parties together, and I do not think it can be suggested that I have been unsympathetic, or that I have not throughout been genuinely anxious to give all the help I can to the improvement of good relations and to the solution of India's political problems. If, therefore, in the present instance I am unable to accept your proposals, it is not from any lack of anxiety to see the atmosphere improved. But on me there rests a very definite and specific obligation, and the same obligation rests on my Government. It is the duty of both of us to ensure peace and good order in this country, to see that India is defended against Japanese and other Axis aggression, and to make certain that nothing is allowed to happen that would further the interests of the enemy, interfere with the war effort of the United Nations, or create internal strife and tumult. So long as that is our obligation, so long as the Congress policy remains what it is, there can be no question of any alteration in our attitude towards the Congress. I have already pointed out that neither from Mr. Gandhi nor from the Congress is there, or has there been, any suggestion of a change of mind or heart. They had the opportunity and have the opportunity still to abandon that policy.

With every respect for your good intentions and your anxiety to see a happy solution, I cannot agree to give special facilities such as you ask for contact with Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders while conditions remain as I have described them.

If on the other hand Mr Gandhi is prepared to repudiate in full the Congress Resolution of last August, to condemn equally those incitements to violence which are represented by his references to "open rebellion", his advice to Congress followers to "do or die," the statement that with the removal of the leaders the rank and file must judge for themselves, and the like, if in addition he and the Congress Party are prepared to give assurances acceptable to Government for the future, then the matter can be considered further

But till then, and while the Congress attitude remains unchanged, Government's first duty is to the people of India, and that duty it intends to discharge. It is not to be deflected from that duty by suggestions, ill-founded as I believe them to be, that by doing its duty it will add to bitterness and ill-feeling. I do not believe that to be the case. But even if it were, that is the price that Government must pay for discharging its responsibilities to the people of India, and I feel certain myself that the people of India appreciate fully the dangerous and sinister character of the Congress campaign of last year—from which such great sections of them stood wholly aloof—and the threat which that campaign represented and would represent again if it were revived, to the safety and tranquillity of this country.

I would add only one word more. You speak of the importance of a National Government. I quite agree with you, and my endeavour during the time that I have been here have been devoted to forming at the Centre a Government as representative and as broadly based as can be found in present circumstances in India. But the fact that you suggest that it is only if you are permitted to consult Mr Gandhi that a genuine National Government can be formed shows that so far from realising the true character of a National Government you contemplate that that Government should be nominated with the approval of a single political leader acting independently of

other parties and other leaders in this country. Not on these lines is progress to be made. No National Government can properly be so described unless, as in the United Kingdom, it is fully representative of all parties and sections of the people, based on their ready co-operation with Government and with one another, united in the prosecution of the war for the objectives of the United Nations, of such a character that its establishment soothes instead of aggravating controversy. The essential preliminary to that is that agreement between parties, communities and interests which I have been so anxious to foster, but to which the excessive claims and the totalitarian ambitions of the Congress and its leaders have been so consistent an obstacle in the past.

MAHATMA ANSWERS TOTTENHAM

Within two days of the termination of the fast Mahatma Gandhi asked the Government a copy of Tottenham's pamphlet

March 5th, 1943

Dear Sir Richard Tottenham,

Gandhiji wishes me to inquire whether he is to be favoured with a copy of the pamphlet issued by the Home Department containing a portion of the evidence in support of the charges against the Congress and himself

Yours truly,
Pyarelal

Home Department,
March 19th, 1943

Dear Sir,

We understand from your letter of March 5th, which reached me a few days ago, that Mr Gandhi wishes to have a copy of the Government of India publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the

Disturbances, 1942-43" If so, I am desirous to say that we should be glad to supply it

Yours truly,
R Tottenham.

To,
Pyarelal, Esq

To,
Sir Richard Tottenham,
Home Department

March 28th 1943

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of 19th instant, I have to say that your interpretation of my letter of March 5th is correct and Gandhiji will be thankful if a copy of the pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" is supplied to him

Yours truly,
Pyarelal

Home Department,

To,
Payrelal, Esq

April 5th, 1943

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of March 28th, I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of the pamphlet "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43" as requested by Mr Gandhi

Yours truly,
R Tottenham

MAHATMA ANSWERS TOTTENHAM

July 15th, 1943

To the Additional Secretary, Home Department
Sir,

In reply to my request dated 5th March last for a copy of Government of India publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43",

I received a copy on 13th April. It contains several corrections marked in red ink. Some of them are striking.

2 I take it that the Government have based the charges made in the publication against the Congress and myself on the material printed therein and not on evidence which, as stated in the preface, is withheld from the public.

3 The preface is brief and is signed by Sir R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department. It is dated 13th February last, i.e., three days after the commencement of my recent fast. The date is ominous. Why was the period of my fast chosen for publishing a document in which I am the target?

4 The preface commences thus

"In response to demands which have reached Government from several sources, Government have now prepared a review which brings together a number of facts bearing on the responsibility of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress High Command for the disturbances which followed the sanctioning of a mass movement by the A-I.C.C. on August 8th, 1942.

There is an obvious misstatement here. The disturbances followed not the "sanctioning of the mass movement by the A-I.C.C." but the arrests made by the Government. As for the "demands", so far as I am aware, they began soon after the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen all over India. As the Government are aware, in my letters to His Excellency the Viceroy, the last being dated 7th February 1943, I had asked for proof in support of my alleged guilt. The evidence now produced might have been given to me when I raised the question. Had my request been complied with, one advantage would certainly have accrued. I would have been heard in answer to the charges brought against me. That very process would have delayed the fast, and who knows, if Government had been patient with me, it might have even prevented it.

5 The preface contains the following sentence "Almost all the facts presented in this review are, or should be, already, within the knowledge of the public" Therefore so far as the public are concerned, there was no such hurry as to require publication of the document during the fast This train of reasoning has led me to the inference that it was published in expectation of my death which medical opinion must have considered almost a certainty It was feared even during my previous long fasts I hope my inference is wholly wrong and the Government had a just and valid reason for choosing the time that they did for the publication of what is after all an indictment of the Congress and me I hope to be pardoned for putting on paper an inference which, if true, must discredit the Government I feel that I am being just to them by unburdening myself of a suspicion instead of harbouring it and allowing it to cloud my judgment about their dealings with me

6 I now come to the indictment itself It reads like a presentation of his case by a prosecutor In the present case the prosecutor happens to be also the policeman and jailor He first arrests and gags his victims, and then opens his case behind their backs

7 I have read it again and again I have gone through the numbers of *Harizan* which my companions happened to have with them, and I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in my writings and doings that could have warranted the inferences and the innuendoes of which the indictment is full In spite of my desire to see myself in my writings as the author has seen me I have completely failed

8 The indictment opens with a misrepresentation I am said to have deplored "the introduction of foreign soldiers into India to aid in India's defence" In the *Harizan* article on which the charge is based I have refused to believe that India was to be defended through the introduction of foreign soldiers If it is India's defence that is aimed at, why should train-

ed Indian soldiers be sent away from India and foreign soldiers brought in instead? Why should the Congress an organisation which was born and lives for the very sake of India's freedom—be suppressed? I am clearer today in my mind than I was when I penned that article on 19th April that India is not being deemed, and if things continue to shape themselves as they are, India will sink at the end of the war deeper than she is today, so that she might forget the very word freedom. Let me quote the relevant passages from the "Harijan" article referred to by the author

I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary."

Harijan, April 26th, 1942, p 128)

[Vide Appendix I (T)]

9 The second paragraph of the indictment opens with this pregnant sentence

"It will be suggested that during the period of Mr Gandhi's first advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7th the Congress High Command, and in the later stages the Congress organisation as a whole, were deliberately setting the stage for a mass movement designed to free India finally from British rule"

Let me italicise the phrase *it will be suggested*. Why should anything be left to suggestion about a movement which is open and above board? Much ado has been made about the simplest things which no-

body has cared to deny and of which Congressmen are even proud. The Congress organisation as a whole "deliberately set the stage designed to free India finally from British rule" as early as the year 1920 and not since my "first advocacy of British withdrawal from India" as suggested in the indictment. Ever since that year the effort for a mass movement has never relaxed. This can be proved from numerous speeches of Congress leaders and from Congress resolutions. Young and impatient Congressmen and even elder men have not hesitated at times to press me to hasten the mass movement. But I, who knew better, always restrained their ardour, and I must gratefully admit that they gladly submitted to the restraint. The contraction of this long period to the interval between my advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7th, is wholly wrong and misleading. I know of no special staging since 25th April, 1942.

10 The same paragraph then says that "an essential preliminary" to an examination of the type of movement "is a clear understanding of the real motives underlying the move." Why should motives be searched when everything is there in black and white? I can say without any hesitation that my motives are always plain. Why I asked for the immediate withdrawal of the British Power from India has been discussed by me almost threadbare in public.

11 At page 2 of the indictment, a phrase has been taken from my article entitled "One Thing Needful" dated 10th May 1942, and I am represented as saying that I would devote the whole of my 'energy' to this "supreme act." By simply detaching the phrase from its context, mystery has been made to surround it. The phrase "supreme act" occurs in an argument addressed to an English friend and, if it is read in its setting, it ceases to be mysterious or objectionable, unless the very idea of withdrawal is held objection-

able Here are the relevant parts from the argument

"I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety There is no such thing as joint common interest

Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but a virtue This is true not only in India but it is equally true in Africa, it is true in Burma and Ceylon These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority

"This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy I have pointed out the remedy complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possession It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations And the clean end of Imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism The suggested action will certainly blunt the end of Fascism and Nazism which are an offshoot of Imperialism

"British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer It is ill-equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes That shock is a necessity India is a

mighty nation No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered

"I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realization of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong It should precede, not follow victory The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India Their withdrawal removes the bait Assume, however, that it does not, free India will be better able to cope the invasion Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway"

(Harijan, May 10th, 1942, p 148)

In this long extract, the phrase "supreme act" takes its legitimate place It does not refer simply to the British withdrawal But it sums up all that must precede and succeed it It is an act worthy of the energy not of one person but of hundreds This is how I began my answer to the English friend's letter

"I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of I remain the same friend today of the British that I was then I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been to their great virtues'

('Harijan, May 10th, 1942, p 148)

To read and fully understand my writings, it is necessary to understand always this background The whole of the movement has been conceived for the mutual benefit of India and England Unfortunately, the author, ignoring this background, has approached my writings with coloured spectacles, and torn sentences and phrases from their context, and dressed them up to suit his preconception Thus he has put out of joint "their withdrawal removes the bait", and omitted the sentence that immediately follows and which

I have restored in the foregoing extract As is clear from the above article, unadulterated non-cooperation here refers exclusively to the Japanese

12 The last paragraph at page 2 begins thus

"In its earlier stages Mr Gandhi's 'Quit India' move was meant and was widely interpreted as a proposal for the physical withdrawal from India of the *British* (italics mine), and of all Allied and British troops"

I have searched, and so have the friends with me, in vain, for some expression in my writings which would warrant the opinion that "Quit India" move was 'meant' as a proposal for the physical withdrawal of the British from India. It is true that colour was lent to such an interpretation by a superficial reading of a sentence in the article of 'Harijan' of April 26th, already quoted. As soon as my attention was drawn to it by an English friend, I wrote in the 'Harijan' of 24th May as follows

"There is evidently confusion in some minds about my invitation to the British to withdraw. For a Britisher writes to say that he likes India and her people and would not like willingly to leave India. He likes too my method of non-violence. Evidently the writer has confused the individual as such with the individual as the holder of power. India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews' friendship was enough to tie me to the British people."

With this clear enunciation of my views before him at the time of penning the indictment, how could he say that I had *meant* physical withdrawal of the British as distinguished from the British power? And I am not aware that my writing was 'widely interpreted as such'. He has quoted nothing in support of this statement.

13 The author proceeds in the same paragraph

"As late as June 14th, he makes, for the purpose of his scheme, the assumption 'that the Commander-in-

Chief of the United American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base' "

"For the purpose of his scheme" is a gratuitous interpolation here. The extract is taken from an interview with several journalists. I was answering a series of questions. At one stage I had put a counter-question thus, "Supposing England retreats from India for strategic purposes, and apart from my proposal—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do?" They replied "That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that." I rejoined "Well, therein comes my non-violence. For we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the United American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the Allied forces there. We can't help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon." It is clear from this quotation that I was not expounding any scheme. I was merely arguing about possibilities based on assumptions agreed between the interviewers and myself.

14 The author proceeds

"Added strength is given to the belief that this is a correct interpretation of Mr Gandhi's original intentions by the prominence, to which attention has already been drawn, of the theme that the British withdrawal would remove any Japanese motive for invading India, for with the British and Allied armies still in India, how is the bait removed?"

I have just now shown that the physical withdrawal of the British was never contemplated by me, of the Allied and the British troops was certainly contemplated in the first instance. Therefore, it is not a question of "interpretation", because it is one of fact. But the sentence has impressed in order to make what is straight, look crooked.

15 Then, proceeds the author

"At the same time he made it clear that on the British departure the Indian Army would be disbanded "

I made clear no such thing What I did was to discuss with interviewers the possibilities in the event of British withdrawal Indian army being a creation of the British Government, I assumed, would be automatically disbanded when that Power withdrew, unless it was taken over, by a treaty, by the replacing Government If the withdrawal took place by agreement and with goodwill on both sides these matters should present no difficulty I give in the Appendix the relevant passages from the interview on the subject [Vide Appendix I (S)]

16 From the same paragraph I take the following —

"Bowling to the gathering force of this opposition, and also, as will be shown later, with a possible view to reconciling disagreement among members of the Working Committee, Mr Gandhi discovered the 'gap' in his original proposals In 'Harijan' of June 14th, he paved the way,—by the slightly cryptic assertion that, if he had his way, the Indian National Government when formed would tolerate the presence of the United Nations on Indian soil under certain well defined conditions but would permit no further assistance—for the more definite statement made to an American journalist in the following week's 'Harijan', when in reply to a question whether he envisaged Free India's allowing Allied troops to operate from India, he said 'I do It will be only then that you will see real co operation' He continued that he did not contemplate the complete shifting of Allied troops from India and that, provided India became entirely free he could not insist on their withdrawal "

This is for me the key thought opening the author's mind It is built on finding motives other than those that are apparent from my language Had

I been guided by the force of the opposition whether from the foreign or the Indian Press or from Congressmen, I should not have hesitated to say so. It is well-known that I am as capable of resisting opposition that makes no appeal to my head or my heart, as I am of readily yielding when it does. But the literal fact is that when I gave the country the withdrawal formula, I was possessed by one idea and one only, that if India was to be saved and also the Allied cause, and if India was to play not merely an effective but, may be, a decisive part in the war, India must be absolutely free now. The "gap" was this although the British Government might be willing to declare India's independence, they might still wish, for their own and for China's defence, to retain their troops in India. What would be my position in that case? It is now well-known that the difficulty was presented to me by Mr Louis Fischer. He had come to Sevagram and stayed with me for nearly a week. As a result of the discussions between us, he drew up certain questions for me to answer. My reply to his second question, the author describes as a "slightly cryptic assertion paving the way for a more definite statement in the following week's 'Harijan'". I give below the whole of the article embodying the questions and answers. It was written on 7th June 1942, and appeared in the 'Harijan' dated 14th June, p 188.

Important Questions

"A friend was discussing with me the implications of the new proposal. As the discussion was naturally desultory, I asked him to frame his questions which I would answer through 'Harijan'. He agreed and gave me the following —

1 Q You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would Indians thereupon form a National Government, and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian Government?

A My proposal is one-sided, i.e. for the British Government to act upon, wholly irrespective of what Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal a Provisional Government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation but only of themselves may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power, the wise leaders will realise their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a Provisional Government out of the material left by the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or rejection of parties or persons to or from the Council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens probably the Congress, the League and the States representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of a Provisional National Government. All this is necessarily guess work and nothing more.

2 Q Would that Indian National Government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers?

A Assuming that the National Government is formed and if it answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the Fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations.

3 Q What further assistance would this Indian National Government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the Fascist aggressors?

A If I have any hand in guiding the imagined National Government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or/and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. And if I have any say in the councils of the National Government, all its power, prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about world peace. But of course after the formation of the National Government my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-minded.

4 Q Do you believe this collaboration between India and the Allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid?

A I think the question is altogether premature, and in any case it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is neither “nations” nor “peoples” must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes unexpressed but no less certain of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans.

Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as test of my *bona fides* and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal."

What is described as the "more definite statement" is nothing but an impromptu reply given to an American journalist, Mr. Grover, representative of the Associated Press of America. If that interview had not chanced to come about, there might have been no statement "more definite" than what appeared in my reply to Mr. Louis Fischer. Hence the writer's suggestion that I "paved the way" for "the more definite statement."

in the following week's 'Harijan' is altogether unwarranted, if I may not call it even mischievous. I do not regard my answers to Mr. Louis Fischer as a "slightly cryptic statement". They are deliberate answers given to deliberate questions framed after a full discussion lasting a week. My answers show very clearly that I had no scheme beyond the "Quit India" formula, that all else was guess, and that immediately the Allied Nations' difficulty was made clear to me, I capitulated. I saw the "gap" and filled it in, the best manner I knew. The "definite statement" fortunately for me, in my opinion leaves little room if any for conjectures and insinuations in which the writer has indulged. Let it speak for itself. Here are the relevant portions

It will be felt by the World

Coming to the point Mr. Grover said again "There is good deal of speculation that you are planning some new movement. What is the nature of it?"

"It depends on the response made by the Government and the people. I am trying to find out public opinion here and also the reaction on the world outside."

"When you speak of the response, you mean response to your new proposal?"

"Oh yes," said Gandhiji, "I mean response to the proposal that the British Government in India should end today. Are you startled?"

"I am not" said Mr Grover "you have been asking for it and working for it"

"That's right I have been working for it for years But now it has taken definite shape and I say that the British power in India should go today for the world peace, for China, for Russia and for the Allied cause I shall explain to you how it advances that Allied cause Complete independence frees India's energies, frees her to make her contribution to the world crisis Toady the Allies are carrying the burden of a huge corpse a huge nation lying prostrate at the feet of Britain, I would even say at the feet of the Allies For America is the predominant partner, financing the war, giving her mechanical ability and her resources which are inexhaustible America is thus a partner in the guilt"

"Do you see a situation when after full independence is granted American and Allied troops can operate from India?" Mr Grover pertinently asked

"I do" said Gandhiji "It will be only then that you will see real co-operation Otherwise all the effort you put up may fail Just now Britain is having India's resources because India is her possession Tomorrow whatever the help, it will be real help for a *free* India"

"You think India in control interferes with Allied action to meet Japan's aggression?"

"It does"

"When I mentioned Allied troops operating I wanted to know whether you contemplated complete shifting of the present troops from India "

"Not necessarily"

"It is on this there is a lot of misconception "

"You have to study all I am writing I have discussed the whole question in the 'current issue of Harijan'. I do not want them to go, on condition that India becomes entirely free I cannot then insist on

their withdrawal, because I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India."

"But suppose your proposal is rejected, what will be your next move?"

"It will be a move which will be felt by the whole world. It may not interfere with the movement of British troops but it is sure to engage British attention. It would be wrong of them to reject my proposal and say India should remain a slave in order that Britain may win or be able to defend China. I cannot accept that degrading position. India free and independent will play a prominent part in defending China. Today I do not think she is rendering any real help to China. We have followed the non-embarrassment policy so far. We will follow it even now. But we cannot allow the British Government to exploit it in order to strengthen the strangle-hold on India. And today it amounts to that. The way, for instance, in which thousands are being asked to vacate their homes with nowhere to go to, no land to cultivate, no resources to fall back upon, is the reward of our non-embarrassment. This should be impossible in any free country. I cannot tolerate India submitting to this kind of treatment. It means greater degradation and servility, and when a whole nation accepts servility it means good-bye for ever to freedom."

India gains from British Victory?

"All you want is the civil grip relaxed. You won't then hinder military activity?" was Mr. Grover's next question.

"I do not know. I want unadulterated independence. If the military activity serves but to strengthen the strangle-hold, I must resist that too. I am no philanthropist to go on helping at the expense of my freedom. And what I want you to see is that a corpse cannot give any help to a living body. The Allies have no moral cause for which they are fighting, so long as they are carrying this double sin on their shoulders,

the sin of India's subjection and the subjection of the Negroes and African races"

Mr Grover tried to draw a picture of a free India *after* an Allied victory. Why not wait for the boons of victory? Gandhiji mentioned as the boons of the last World War the Rowlatt Act and martial law and Amritsar. Mr Grover mentioned more economic and industrial prosperity by no means due to the grace of the Government, but by the force of circumstances, and economic prosperity was a step further forward to Swaraj. Gandhiji said the few industrial gains were wrung out of unwilling hands, he set no store by such gains after this war, those gains may be further shackles, and it was a doubtful proposition whether there would be any gains when one had in mind the industrial policy that was being followed during the war. Mr Grover did not seriously press the point

What can America do?

"You don't expect any assistance from America in persuading Britain to relinquish her hold on India" asked Mr Grover half incredulously

"I do indeed" replied Gandhiji

"With any possibility of success?"

"There is every possibility, I should think," said Gandhiji. "I have every right to expect America to throw her full weight on the side of justice, if she is convinced of the justice of Indian cause"

"You don't think the American Government is committed to British remaining in India?"

"I hope not. But British diplomacy is so clever that America, even though it may not be committed, and in spite of the desire of President Roosevelt and the people to help India, it may not succeed. British propaganda is so well organised in America against the Indian cause that the few friends India has there have no chance of being effectively heard. And the political system is so rigid that public opinion does not affect the administration"

"It may, slowly," said Mr. Grover apologetically

"Slowly?" said Gandhiji "I have waited long and I can wait no longer It is a terrible tragedy that 40 crores of people should have no say in this war If we have the freedom to play our part we can arrest the march of Japan and save China "

What do you promise to do?

Mr Grover, having made himself sure that Gandhiji did not insist on the literal withdrawal of either the British or the troops, now placing himself in the position of the Allies, began to calculate the gains of the bargain Gandhiji of course does not want independence as a reward of any services, but as a right and in discharge of a debt long overdue "What specific things would be done by India to save China," asked Mr Grover, "if India is declared independent?"

"Great things, I can say at once, though I may not be able to specify them today," said Gandhiji "For I do not know what Government we shall have. We have various political organisations here which I expect would be able to work out a proper national solution Just now they are not solid parties, they are often acted upon by the British power they look up to it and its frown or favour means much to them The whole atmosphere is corrupt and rotten Who can foresee the possibilities of a corpse to live? At present India is a dead weight to the Allied "

"By dead weight you mean a menace to British and to American interests here?"

"I do It is a menace in that you never know that sullen India will do at a given moment "

"No, but I want to make myself sure that if genuine pressure was brought to bear on Britain by America, there would be solid support from yourself "

"Myself? I do not count with the weight of 73 years on my shoulders But you get the co-operation whatever it can give willingly of a free and mighty

nation My co-operation is of course there I exercise what influence I can by writings from week to week. But India's is an infinitely greater influence Today because of widespread discontent there is not that active hostility to Japanese advance The moment we are free, we are transformed into a nation prizing its liberty and defending it with all its might and therefore helping the Allied cause "

"May I concretely ask—will the difference be the difference that there is between what Burma did and what, say, Russia is doing?" said Mr Grover

"You might put it that way They might have given Burma independence after separating it from India But they did nothing of the kind They stuck to the same old policy of exploiting her There was little co-operation from Burmans, on the contrary there was hostility or inertia They fought neither for their own cause nor for the Allied cause Now take a possible contingency If the Japanese compel the Allies to retire from India to a safer base, I cannot say today that the whole of India will be up in arms against the Japanese I have a fear that they may degrade themselves as some Burmans did I want India to oppose Japan to a man If India was free she would do it, it would be a new experience to her, in twenty-four hours her mind would be changed All parties would then act as one man If this live independence is declared today I have no doubt that India becomes a powerful ally "

Mr Grover raised the question of communal disunion as a handicap, and himself added that before the American Independence there was not much unity in the States "I can only say that as soon as the vicious influence of the third party is withdrawn, the parties will be face to face with reality and close up ranks," said Gandhiji "Ten to one my conviction is that the communal quarrels will disappear as soon as the British power that keeps us apart disappears."

Why no Dominion Status?

"Would not Dominion Status declared today do was equally well? Mr Grover's final question

"No good," said Gandhiji instantaneously. "We will have no half measures, no tinkering with independence. It is not independence that they will give to this party or that party, but to an indefinable India. It was wrong, I say, to possess India. This wrong should be righted by leaving India to herself"

(*'Harijan'*, June 21st, 1942, pp 193 *et seq*)

17 The rest of the chapter is taken up with a colourful description of the draft resolution I sent to Allahabad and a quotation containing remarks attributed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and Shri Rajagopalachari on that resolution. Immediately after the publication of the extracts from the notes seized by the Government, Panditji issued a statement which I append herto [*Vide Appendix V (C)*]. I cannot understand why the author has disregarded that important statement, unless for the reason that he disbelieved Panditji's explanation. As for Shri Rajagopalachari's statement, the author stands on less insecure ground. Rajaji certainly holds the views attributed to him. In the interview with Mr Grover the American correspondent, this is what I said about Rajaji's difference with me —

"May I finally ask you about your attitude to Rajaji's move?"

"I have declared that I will not discuss Rajaji in public. It is ugly to be talking *at* valued colleagues. My difference with him stands, but there are some things which are too sacred to be discussed in public."

But Mr Grover had not so much in mind the Pakistan controversy as C R's crusade for the formation of a national government. Mr. Grover had the discernment to make it clear that C R "could not be motivated by British Government. His position happens to harmonise with them"

"You are right," said Gandhiji "It is fear of the Japanese that makes him tolerate the British rule. He would postpone the question of freedom until after the war. On the contrary I say that if the war is to be decisively won, India must be freed to play her part today. I find no flaw in my position. I have arrived at it after considerable debating within myself; I am doing nothing in hurry or anger. There is not the slightest room in me for accommodating the Japanese. No, I am sure that India's independence is not only essential for India, but for China and the Allied cause."

(*'Harijan'*, June 21st, 1942, p. 195)

18 The first chapter concludes with the following commentary on the draft which had been sent by me to the Working Committee at Allahabad —

"A draft, to repeat, of which the whole thought and background is one of favouring Japan, a resolution which amounts to running into the arms of Japan."

And this is written in spite of Pandit Jawaharlal's repudiation of the statement attributed to him, and in spite of my explanation about differences with Rajaji — all of which was before the writer.

19 In support of my contention that the author had no warrant for the opinions expressed in the sentences quoted, I would like to draw attention to the following extracts from my press statement reported in the *'Bombay Chronicle'* of 5th August last —

'As the language of the draft (the one that was sent to Allahabad) shows, it had many I's to be dotted and T's to be crossed. It was sent through Miraben to whom I had explained the implications of the draft and I said to her or to the friends of the Working Committee who happened to be in Sevagram to whom I had explained the draft, that there was an omission — deliberate—from my draft as to the foreign policy of the Congress and, therefore, any reference to China and Russia.

"For, as I had said to them, I derived my inspiration and knowledge from Panditji about foreign mat-

ters of which he had been a deep student. Therefore I said that he could fill in that part in the resolution.

'But I may add that I have never even in a most unguarded moment expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war. Not only that, I have often expressed the opinion that they cannot win the war; if only Great Britain will once for all shed her Imperialism. I have given expression to that opinion more than once in the columns of 'Harijan' and I repeat here that in spite of all my wish to the contrary and of others, if disaster overtakes Great Britain and the Allied Powers it will be because even at the critical moment most critical in her history she has most obstinately refused to wash herself of the taint of Imperialism which she has carried with her for at least a century and a half."

How in the face of this categorical statement the author could say that the actuating motive behind the "Quit India" move was that I was "convinced that Axis would win the war" passes understanding.

20 In support of the same charge the author says

"That this attitude persisted long after the Allahabad meeting of the Working Committee is shown by the following remark made by Mr. Gandhi in 'Harijan' of July 19th, in reply to a question whether it would not be wiser to postpone his movement until Britain had settled with the Germans and the Japanese

"No, because I know you will not settle with Germans without us"

I quote below from the article in which this opinion is expressed. It is from the 'Harijan' of July 19th, pp. 234 and 235, and is entitled 'A Two Minutes' Interview', the interviewer being a correspondent of the 'Daily Express', London

"But the correspondent of the 'Daily Express' (London) who was among the first to arrive and who was not staying until the end said he would be con-

tent with just a couple of minutes' interview, and Gandhiji acceded to his request

He had made up his mind that if the demand for withdrawal which seemed to gather strength every day was rejected, there would be some kind of a movement. So he asked

"Would you say that your movement will make it more difficult or less difficult for us to keep the Japanese out of India?"

"Our movement," said Gandhiji, "will make it more difficult for the Japanese to come in. But of course if there is no co-operation from Britain and the Allies, I cannot say."

"But", said Mr Young, "think of the war as a whole. Do you think that your new movement will help the Allied nations towards victory, which you have said you also desire?"

"Yes, if my submission is accepted"

"What do you mean by your submission?—That Britain should offer non-violent battle?"

"No, no. My submission that British rule in India should end. If that is accepted victory for the Allied powers is assured. Then India will become an independent power, and thus a real ally, while now she is only a slave. The result of my movement, if it is sympathetically responded to, is bound to be a speedy victory. But if it is misunderstood by the British and they take up the attitude that they would like to crush it, then they would be responsible for the result, not I."

This was far from convincing Mr Young. He would not think of any movement with equanimity. So he made an appeal to Gandhiji's sentiment—a sentiment he had more than once expressed.

"Mr Gandhi, you have been in London yourself. Have you no comment to make on the heavy bombings which the British people have sustained?"

"Oh yes. I know every nook and corner of London where I lived for three years so many years ago, and somewhat of Oxford and Cambridge and Manchester too, but it is London I especially feel for. I

used to read in the Inner Temple Library, and would often attend Dr Parker's sermons in the Temple Church. My heart goes out to the people, and when I heard that the Temple Church was bombed I bled. And the bombing of the Westminster Abbey and other ancient edifices affected me deeply."

"Then don't you think" said Mr Young, "it would be wiser to postpone your movement until we have settled with the Germans and the Japanese?"

"No, because I know you will not settle with the Germans without us. If we were free, we could give you cent per cent co-operation in our own manner. It is curious that such a simple thing is not understood. Britain has today no contribution from a free India. Tomorrow as soon as India is free she gains moral strength and a powerful ally in a free nation—powerful morally. This raises England's power to the nth degree. This is surely self-proved." It is curious that sentences taken out of a piece breathing concern for the success of the Allied arms are here presented as an indication of my "pro-Axis" mentality!

21 The following passage is then reproduced from my letter to His Excellency the Viceroy of 14th August last as "significant":

"I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can." The misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia has been italicized by the author who thus comments on the passage:

"They foresaw a British rearguard action across India and the devastation that this must entail!"

According to his wont the author has failed to quote the whole of the relevant part of the letter. Nor has he guided the reader by quoting the letter in the appendix. I quote below the relevant part.

"One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of

Indians think that freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with Imperialism.

He dreads much more than I do the success of Nazism and Fascism. I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such powerful friend and ally."

The full letter is given in the appendix (*vide* Appendix IX). I suggest that the full quotation gives a meaning wholly different from that given by the author. The following passages from 'Harijan' will further prove the baselessness of the charge of pro-Axis or "defeatist" tendency on my part.

Q Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the Allies are going to be defeated in this war?.....

A. "..... I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary I said only the other day in "Harijan" that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated

('Harijan', June 7th, 1942, p. 177)

"..... America is too big financially, intellectually and in scientific skill, to be subdued by any nation or even combination....."

('Harijan', June 7th, 1942, p. 181).

22. A further complete answer to the same charge, if one were still needed, is furnished by my letter to Shrimati Miraben, dictated on the spur of the moment, and never meant for publication. The letter was written to her in answer to her question which carried

to me her belief that the Japanese attack was imminent and that they were likely to have a walk-over. My answer leaves no doubt whatever as to my attitude. The letter was written after the Allahabad meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. It was dictated by me to the late Shri Mahadev Desai. The original is in Shrimati Miraben's possession. I know that she wrote a letter to Lord Linlithgow from this camp on December 24th last sending copies of this correspondence and requesting its publication. She never received even an acknowledgement of her communication. I hope it was not pigeon-holed without so much as being read. I give it in the appendix for ready reference [*vide* Appendix II (H)]

23. In view of the colourful description of my draft resolution sent to Allahabad, I reproduce opposite passages from the resolution, to show that the author has gone to everything connected with the Congress with the deliberate intention, as it seems to me, of seeing nothing but evil. Thus "Britain is incapable of defending India" is followed by these sentences

"It is natural that whatever she (Britain) does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives."

24. Then there is this sentence taken from the draft:

"If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan." This has to be read in conjunction with the following paragraphs from the draft

"This committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation.

India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-co-operation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-co-operation —

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders

2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary.

At present our non-co-operation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-co-operation when they are actually fighting it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any

help from us beyond our non-interference They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept

Whilst non-co-operation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true-building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability to reform dacoits and save the people from them If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence ”

“I contend that from this setting it is impossible to infer pro-Japanese attitude or anti-British attitude on my part or that of the Working Committee On the contrary there is determined opposition to any aggression and meticulous concern for the Allied arms The demand for immediate freedom itself is born of that concern If the search be for implacable opposition on my part to British Imperialism that search is superficial, for it is patent in all my writings ”

25 “I would like to close this subject by quoting some passages from my speeches on the 7th and 8th August last

Extract from the Hindustani Speech on 7th August

“Then, there is the question of your attitude towards the British I have noticed that there is hatred towards the British among the people They say they are disgusted with their behaviour The people make no distinction between British Imperialism and the British people To them the two are one This hatred would make them welcome the Japanese This is most

dangerous. It means that they will exchange one slavery for another. We must get rid of this feeling. Our quarrel is not with the British people, we fight them Imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture. It is not a happy position for a big country like India to be merely helping with money and material obtained willy-nilly from her while the United Nations are conducting the war. We cannot evoke the true spirit of sacrifice and valour so long as we do not feel that it is our war, so long as we are not free. I know the British Government will not be able to withhold freedom from us when we have made enough self-sacrifice. We must therefore purge ourselves of hatred. Speaking for myself I can say that I have never felt any hatred. As a matter of fact I feel myself to be a greater friend of the British now than ever before. One reason is that they are today in distress. My very friendship therefore demands that I should try to save them from their mistakes. As I view the situation they are on the brink of an abyss. It therefore becomes my duty to warn them of their danger even though it may for the time being, anger them to the point of cutting off the friendly hand that is stretched out to help them. People may laugh, nevertheless that is my claim. At a time when I may have to launch the biggest struggle of my life, I may not harbour hatred against anybody. The idea of taking advantage of the opponent's difficulty and utilising it for delivering a blow is entirely repugnant to me.

"There is one thing which I would like you always to keep before your mind. Never believe that the British are going to lose the war. I know they are not a nation of cowards. They will fight to the last rather than accept defeat. But suppose, for strategic reasons they are forced to leave India as they had to leave Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, what shall be our position in that event? The Japanese will invade India and we shall be unprepared. Occupation of India by

the Japanese will mean too the end of China and perhaps Russia. I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's and China's defeat. Pandit Nehru was only today describing to me the wretched condition of Russia. He was agitated. The picture he drew still haunts me. I have asked myself the question "What can I do to help Russia and China?" And the reply has come from within, "You are being weighed in the balance. You have in the alchemy of ahimsa a universal panacea. Why don't you give it a trial? Have you lost faith?" Out of this agony has emerged the proposal for British withdrawal. It may irritate the Britishers today and they may misunderstand me, they may even look upon me as their enemy. But some day they will say that I was their true friend."

From the Hindustani Speech on 8th August

After showing concern for China I said-

I therefore want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. It cannot now wait for the realisation of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifice for attaining freedom will need to be much greater than would otherwise have been the case. The Congress has to win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. The freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for Congressmen alone but for the whole of the Indian people.

From the Hindustani Speech on 8th August

It will be the greatest mistake on their (United Nations') part to turn a deaf ear to India's non-violent pleading and refuse her fundamental right of freedom. It will deal a mortal blow to Russia and China if they oppose the demand of non-violent India which is today, on bended knee, pleading for the discharge of a debt long overdue. I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking in strong language. My non-embarrassment plea, however, was always qualified by the proviso, "consistently with the honour and safety

of the nation" If a man holds me by the collar and I am drowning, may I not struggle to free myself from the strangle-hold? Therefore there is no inconsistency between our earlier declarations and our present demand

I have always recognised a fundamental difference between Fascism and the Democracies, despite their many limitations, and even between Fascism and the British Imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from an India which they hold in bondage. Think what a difference it would make if India were to participate in the war as a free ally. That freedom if it is to come, must come today. For she will utilise that freedom for the success of the Allies, including Russia and China. The Burma Road will once more be opened, and the way clear for rendering really effective help to Russia (China?)

Englishmen did not die to the last man in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. They effected instead, what has been described as a "masterly evacuation". But I cannot afford to do that. Where shall I go, where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this mass of humanity to set aflame in the cause of world deliverance unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today there is no life left in them. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre has to be restored to their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but today. Congress must therefore pledge itself to do or die.

These quotations show clearly why I advised the Congress to make the demand for the withdrawal of British Power. The quotations also show that non-violence i.e., self-sacrificing and self-sacrifice without reathation was the key-stone of the movement.

26 The author has had difficulty in finding an adequate explanation for my agreement to the stationing of Allied troops in India in spite of the withdrawal of British power. If he had an open mind, there should have been no difficulty. My explanation was there. There was no occasion to doubt its sincerity unless

there was positive evidence to the contrary I have never claimed infallibility or a large share of intellect for myself than the ordinary

27 The author says that no "satisfactory solution" of the difficulty raised by Rajaji, namely, that the stationing of the Allied forces, without civil power being with the British Government, would be "reinstallation of the British Government in a worse form" was "ever made public by Mr Gandhi" The author therefore suggests that "the solution was one which he (I) preferred should remain a secret", and he proceeds to say

"Now while the details of Mr Gandhi's personal solution of this problem must remain a matter for speculation, an explanation which fulfils the logical requirements of the above situation immediately comes to mind, it is that, as has been shown above to be probable, Mr Gandhi's admission of this amendment to his scheme was intended primarily as a bid for American support and secondarily as a sop to his opponents on the Working Committee, but that he envisaged, or planned to create, circumstances in which this permission would be meaningless, that is to say circumstances in which the troops would either be forced to withdraw, or would, if they remained, be rendered ineffective"

It is difficult to characterise this suggestion I take it that the secrecy suggested was to be secret even from the members of the Working Committee If not they would also become conspirators with me in the fraud to be perpetrated on the Allied powers Amazing consequences would flow from such a fraud Assume that the British Government has shed all power in India, that by an agreement between the free India Government and the Allied Powers, their troops are stationed in India This assumption carries with it the further assumption that the agreement has been arrived at without any pressure violent or non-violent and simply from the British recognition of the necessity of recognising Independence of India Assume further that

the secret has all this time remained buried in my bosom, and that I suddenly divulge it to the free India Government and therefore to the world, and they carry out my plan to frustrate the terms of the agreement, what would be the result? The Allied Powers, having all the overwhelming military strength at their disposal, would forfeit my head to themselves—which would be the least and would further let their righteous rage descend upon the free India Government and put an end to Independence, which was won, not by military strength, but simply by force of reason, and therefore make it impossible, so far as they can, for India to regain such lost independence. I must not carry this train of thought much further. The author's suggestion if it were true, would also conclusively prove that all of us conspirators were thinking, not of the deliverance of India from bondage, or of the good of the masses but only of our base little selves.

28 The difficulty pointed out by Rajaji and on which the writer has laid stress in order to infer "secret motive" on my part was pointed out even more forcibly by another correspondent and I dealt with it in the issue of 'Harijan', dated 19th July 1942, pages 232 and 233. As the whole of the article consists of questions and answers which have a bearing on the author's insinuations I reproduce them without apology.

Pertinent Questions

Q 1 If non-violent activity is neutralised by and cannot go along with armed violence in the same area, will there remain any scope for non-violent resistance to aggression in the event of India allowing foreign troops to remain on her soil and operate from here?

A The flaw pointed out in the first question cannot be denied. I have admitted it before now. The tolerance of Allied troops by Free India is an admission of the nation's limitations. The nation as a whole has never been and never been (has?) claimed to be non-violent. What part is cannot be said with any

accuracy And what is decisive is that India has not yet demonstrated non-violence of the strong such as would be required to withstand a powerful army of invasion If we had developed that strength we would have acquired our freedom long ago and there would be no question of any troops being stationed in India The novelty of the demand should not be missed It is a demand not for a transference of power from Great Britain to a Free India For there is no party to which Britain would transfer such power We lack the unity that gives strength The demand therefore is not based on our demonstrable strength It is a demand made upon Britain to do the right irrespective of the capacity of the party wronged to bear the consequences of Britain's right act Will Britain restore seized property to the victim merely because the seizure was wrong? It is none of her concern to weigh whether the victim will be able to hold possession of the restored property Hence it is that I have been obliged to make use of the word anarchy in this connection This great moral act must give Britain moral status which could ensure victory Whether without India Britain would have reason to fight is a question, I need not consider. If India is the stake and not British honour we should know My demand then loses force but not justness

Such being the case my honesty and honour require me to provide for the flaw If to ask for the withdrawal of the Allied forces means their certain defeat, my demand must be ruled out as dishonest Force of circumstances has given rise to the demand and also to its limitations It must be admitted therefore that there will be little scope for non-violent resistance of aggression, with the Allied troops operating in India as there is practically none now For the troops are there today enjoying full mastery over us Under my demand they will operate under the nation's terms

Q 2 If the maintenance of India's freedom is allowed to be made dependent upon arms which, in the existing circumstances, will be led and controlled by Britain and America, can there be a feeling of real

freedom experienced by the people of India, at any rate, during the duration of the war?

A If Britain's declaration is honest I see no reason why the presence of the troops should, in any shape or form, affect the feeling of real freedom. Did the French feel differently when during the last war the English troops were operating in France? When my master of yesterday becomes my equal and lives in my house on my own terms, surely his presence cannot detract from my freedom. Nay, I may profit by his presence which I have permitted.

Q 3. Whatever be the terms of the "treaty", if the Anglo-American military machine is allowed to operate for the "defence" of India, can Indians play anything but a minor and subordinate role in the defence of this country?

A The conception in my scheme is that we do not want these troops for our defence or protection. If they left these shores we expect to manage somehow. We may put up non-violent defence. If luck favours us, the Japanese may see no reason to hold the country after the Allies have withdrawn, if they discover that they are not wanted. It is all speculation as to what can happen after withdrawal voluntary and orderly or forced.

Q 4. Supposing the British, not from any moral motive but only to gain a political and strategical advantage for the time being, agree to a 'treaty' under which they are allowed to maintain and increase their military forces in India, how can they be dislodged afterwards if they prefer to remain in possession?

A We assume their or rather British honesty. It would be not a matter of dislodging them, it is one of their fulfilling their plighted word. If they commit breach of faith, we must have strength enough non-violent or violent to enforce fulfilment.

Q 5. Is not the position postulated in the preceding question comparable to the position that would arise if, for instance, Subhas Babu made a treaty with Germany and Japan under which India would be de-

clared "independent" and the Axis forces would enter India to drive the British out?

A Surely there is as much difference between the South Pole and the North as there is between the imagined conditions. My demand deals with the possessor, Subhas Babu will bring German troops to oust the possessor. Germany is under no obligation to deliver India, from bondage. Therefore Subhas Babu's performance can only fling India from the frying pan into the fire. I hope the distinction is clear.

Q 6 If the Congress, as Maulana Saheb has just stated, "considers defence as armed defence only", is there any prospect of real independence for India, in view of the fact that India simply has not got the resources "independently" to offer effective armed resistance to a formidable aggressor? If we are to think in terms of armed defence only, can India, to mention only one thing, expect to remain independent with her 4,000 miles of coast-line and no navy and shipbuilding industry?

A Maulana Saheb, it is well-known, does not hold my view that any country can defend itself without force of arms. My demand is based on the view that it is possible to defend one's country non-violently.

Q 7 What material aid could India send to China today, even if she were declared "independent" by the British?

A India at present gives such indifferent and ill-conceived aid as the Allies think desirable. Free India can send men and material that China may need. India has affinities with China being part of Asia which the Allies cannot possibly possess and exploit. Who knows that Free India may not even succeed in persuading Japan to do the right by China?

Why has the author ignored the explanation for instance in answers 2 and 4 which was before him? Boiled down, my explanation means that I would trust the Allies to carry out faithfully the conditions of the Contract to be fulfilled by them, just as I would expect them to trust the Government of Free India to carry

out then part of the contract British withdrawal, whenever it comes, will carry with it so much honour that everything to be done thereafter by either party will be done with the greatest goodwill and utmost sincerity I hold that this solution of the difficulty presented is perfectly comprehensible and satisfactory

29 As to secrecy, this is what I said on the 8th August in my Hindustani speech before the A-I.C.C. meeting

Nothing however should be done secretly This is an open rebellion In the struggle secrecy is a sin A freeman would not engage in a secret movement It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a CID of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary But in the present struggle we have to work openly and to receive bullets in our chests, without running away In a struggle of this character all secrecy is sin and must be punctiliously avoided

See also Appendix I (C)

It is somewhat hard for a man who has avoided secrecy as a sin to be accused of it, especially when there is no evidence whatsoever for the charge

30 The author proceeds-

"and it is no coincidence that, at the same time as Mr Gandhi was developing his 'Quit India' theme in 'Harijan', he was also inveighing against any form of 'scorched earth' policy (Mr Gandhi's solicitude for the property, largely industrial property be it noted, which it might have been necessary to deny to the enemy, contrasts strangely with his readiness to sacrifice countless numbers of Indians in non-violent resistance to the Japanese The property must be saved, it is perhaps legitimate to ask—for whom?)" "No coincidence" is a gratuitous suggestion for which there is no proof The suggestion behind the parenthetical gloss is evidently that I was more solicitous about the property of moneyed men than of the lives and property of the masses This appears to me to be a wilful distortion of truth I give the following quotations which show the contrary

"As a war resister my answer can only be one I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard any one as my enemy—that is, out of humanitarian motive

But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration Unlike Russia's India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have India is not fighting Her conquerors are" ('Harijan', March 22nd, 1942, page 88)

"There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, pre-supposes purity Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war Among the excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennoble me

"My questioner has missed the conditional expression 'if I must' I have imagined a state of things in which I am not prepared just now to die and therefore I want to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of resisting under other and better auspices The thing to consider here is not resistance but non-destruction of food crops and the like Resistance, violent or non-violent, has to be well thought out Thoughtless resistance will be regarded as bravado in military parlance,

and violence or folly in the language of non-violence Retreat itself is often a plan of resistance and may be a precursor of great bravery and sacrifice Every retreat is not cowardice which implies fear to die Of course a brave man would more often die violently or non-violently resisting the aggressor in the latter's attempt to oust him from his property But he will be no less brave if wisdom dictates present retreat" ('Harijan', April 12th, 1942, page 109)

So far there is solicitude only for the poor man's property There is no mention of industrial property. I have also given my reasons, which I still hold to be perfectly sound, for non-destruction of such property I have found only one note in the issues of 'Harijan' in my possession which refers to industrial property It is as follows —

Suppose there are factories for grinding wheat or pressing oil seed I should not destroy them But munitions factories, yes, Textile factories I would not destroy and I would resist all such destruction" ('Harijan', May 24th, 1942, page 167)

The reason is obvious. Here too the solicitude is not for the owners, but for the masses who use food products and cloth produced in factories It should also be remembered that I have all along written and even acted against both kinds of factories, in normal times, in the interests of village industries, my creed being to prefer the products of hand labour in which millions can be engaged, to those of factories in which only a few thousands or at best a few lakhs can be employed

31 Mark too the last sentence in the penultimate paragraph of the draft resolution sent to Allahabad "But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses" It is incomprehensible how the author could, in the face of the foregoing, distort truth as he has done

32 In the same paragraph from which I have quoted the parenthetical remark of the author, I find the following —

"We have, however, his own admission that he could not guarantee that non-violent action would keep the Japanese at bay, he refers indeed to any such hope as an 'unwarranted supposition' "

And this is cited to support the conclusion that in order to prevent India from becoming a battlefield between the Allied Nations and Japan I was prepared "to concede to them (Japanese) demands" Let me quote where the phrase is taken from In an article entitled "A Fallacy", in 'Harijan', dated 5th July 1942, I have dealt with the following question addressed to me by a correspondent —

Q "You consider it a vital necessity in terms of non-violence to allow the Allied troops to remain in India You also say that, as you cannot present a fool-proof non-violent method to prevent Japanese occupation of India, you cannot throw the Allies overboard But don't you consider that the non-violent force created by your action which will be sufficient to force the English to withdraw will be sufficiently strong to prevent Japanese occupation also? And is it not the duty of a non-violent resister to equally consider it a vital necessity to see that his country, his home and his all are not destroyed by allowing two foreign mad bulls to fight a deadly war on his soil "

My reply to this runs as follows

A "There is an obvious fallacy in the question I cannot all of a sudden produce in the minds of Britishers who have been for centuries trained to rely upon their muscle for their protection, a belief which has not made a very visible impression even on the Indian mind Non-violent force must not act in the same way as violence The refusal to allow the Allied troops to operate on the Indian soil can only add to the irritation already caused by my proposal The first is inevitable, the second would be wanton

Again, if the withdrawal is to take place, it won't be due merely to the non-violent pressure And in any case what may be enough to affect the old occupant would be wholly different from what would be required

to keep off the invader. Thus we can disown the authority of the British rulers by refusing taxes and in a variety of ways. These would be inapplicable to withstand the Japanese onslaught. Therefore, whilst we may be ready to face the Japanese we may not ask the Britishers to give up their position of vantage merely on the unwarranted supposition that we would succeed by mere non-violent effort in keeping off the Japanese.

Lastly, whilst we must guard ourselves in our own way, our non-violence must preclude us from imposing on the British a strain which must break them. That would be a denial of our whole history for the past twenty-two years" ('Harijan', July 5th, 1942, page 210).

The supposition referred to here is my correspondent's namely, that the non-violent force created by my action which will be sufficient to force the English to withdraw, will be sufficiently strong to prevent Japanese occupation also and therefore I should not have resiled from my original proposition that the British Power should withdraw their troops from India. I have shown the absurdity of such a supposition made for the sake of preventing the retention of British troops. My belief in the power of non-violence is unchangeable, but I cannot put it before the British in order to prevent their use of India as a base, if they consider it necessary, for dealing with the Japanese menace.

33 The author has further sought to strengthen his inference by quoting the following from my appeal to the Japanese —

"And we are in the unique position of having to resist an imperialism that we detest no less than yours (the Japanese) and Nazism."

The author has conveniently omitted the sentences which follow and which instead of strengthening his inference would negative it altogether. These are the sentences

"Our resistance to it (British Imperialism) does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to con-

vert them Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly—but friendly quarrel with the foreign Rulers

But in this they need no aid from Foreign Powers You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity we should have done it as soon as the War broke out nearly three years ago Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India should in no way be misunderstood In fact if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the Independence of India, a recognition of that Independence by Britain should leave you no excuse for any attack on India Moreover the reported profession suits ill with your ruthless aggression against China

I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India by making her free for resisting all militarist and Imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarisation of the world in spite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit and ambition Personally I fear that without declaring the Independence of India the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare If they copy it, their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to nought I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognising now the freedom of India, and turning sullen

India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation

To Britain and the Allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions, and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies some other Powers will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds however skilfully achieved.

Even if you win it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies too, unless they perform now the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to

no appeal but to the sword How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Anyway I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you" ('Harijan', July 26th, 1942, page 240 *et seq*)

I have given this long quotation because I see that it is a complete answer to the author's insinuations, as it is also an open gate to the whole of my mind regarding the movement contemplated in the resolution of 8th August last But the author has many arrows in his quiver For, in defence of his inference that I was prepared to "concede to them (Japanese) demands", he proceeds:

"Only in the grip of some dominant emotion would he (I) have contemplated such a capitulation This emotion was, there seems little doubt, his desire to preserve India from the horrors of war"

In other words, I would exchange Japanese rule for British My non-violence is made of sterner stuff Only a jaundiced eye can read such an emotion in the face of the clearest possible writings of 'Harijan' that I would face all the horrors of war in order to end the horror of horrors which British domination is I am impatient of it because I am impatient of all domination I am in "the grip" of only one "dominant emotion" and no other, that is INDIA'S FREEDOM The author has admitted this in the same breath that he has charged me with an unworthy emotion He has thus condemned himself out of his own mouth

34 At page 14 of the indictment the author says

"In conclusion there are the famous words uttered by Mr Gandhi at a press conference at Wardha, after the Working Committee had passed the resolution of July 14th, which show clearly, how even at that early stage he was fully determined on a final struggle,—

"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an 'open rebellion'."

"There also lies the answer to those who have since accused Government of precipitating the crisis by the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders and have suggested that the period of grace referred to by Mr. Gandhi in his Bombay speech should have been utilised for negotiation. 'there is no room left for withdrawal or negotiation,' Mr. Gandhi had said a month earlier. Moreover the Wardha resolution merely threatened a mass movement if the demands of Congress were not accepted. The Bombay resolution went further. It no longer 'threatened' a movement with the delay that that might entail. It 'sanctioned' the movement and if any further delay was intended, are there not at least good grounds for believing in the light of all that had been said, that it was to be used not for the purpose of negotiation but for putting the finishing touches to a plan to which its authors were already committed but which might not yet be completely ready to put into execution?"

I shall presently show that the "famous words" attributed to me are partly a distortion and partly an interpolation not to be found in the authentic report of the Wardha interview as published in 'Harijan' of 19th July, 1942. Let me quote in full the portion of the Wardha interview in which that part of the quotation which I claim is distorted appears in its correct form.

"Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government?"

"They may, but with whom they will do it I do not know. For it is not a question of placating one party or other. For it is the unconditional withdrawal of the British power without reference to the wishes of any party that is our demand. The demand is therefore based on its justice. Of course it is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do, it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, how-

ever late, the wisdom of recognising the Independence of India, without reference to the various parties, all things are possible But the point I want to stress is this viz, that THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN THE PROPOSAL FOR WITHDRAWAL Either they recognise Independence or they don't After that recognition many things can follow For by that one single act the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number Therefore whenever that great act is performed on behalf of the British people, it will be a red letter day in the history of India and the world And, as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war" (Capitals mine)

(‘Harijan,’ July 19th, 1942, page 238)

The corresponding quotation in the indictment I reproduce below in capital letters

“THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT IN THE PROPOSAL FOR WITHDRAWAL OR NEGOTIATIONS”

I suggest that in the context from which this is torn and distorted, it is entirely out of place I was answering the question “Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government?” As an answer to the question, the sentence as it appears in ‘Harijan’ “there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal’, is perfectly intelligible and harmonises with the sentences preceding and succeeding.

35 The distorted sentence in the indictment has two others tacked on to it They are “There is no question of one more chance After all it is an *open rebellion*” The italicizing is the author’s The two sentences are not to be found anywhere in the report of the interview as it appears in ‘Harijan’ “There is no question of one more chance”, can have no place in the paragraph about negotiations with my approach to them as revealed in my answer As to “open rebellion”, I have even at the Second Indian Round Table

Conference used that expression coupled with the adjective non-violent. But it has no place anywhere in the interview.

36 I have taxed myself to know how the two sentences could have crept into the author's quotation. Fortunately on 26th June, while this reply was being typed there came the 'Hindustan Times' file for which Shr. Pyarelal had asked. In its issue of 15th July 1942, there appears the following message

Wardhaganj, July 14th

"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation, either they recognise India's independence or they don't" said Mahatma Gandhi answering questions at a Press interview at Sevagram on the Congress resolution. He emphasized that what he wanted was not the recognition of Indian independence on paper, but in action.

Asked if his movement would not hamper war efforts of the United Nations, Mahatma Gandhi said "The movement is intended not only to help China but also to make common cause with the Allies"

On his attention being drawn to Mr Amery's latest statement in the House of Commons, Mahatma Gandhi said "I am very much afraid that we shall have the misfortune to listen to a repetition of that language in stronger terms, but that cannot possibly delay the pace of the people or the group that is determined to go its way" Mahatma Gandhi added "There is no question of one more chance. After all, it is an open rebellion"

Asked what form his movement would take, Mahatma Gandhi said "The conception is that of a mass movement on the widest possible scale. It will include what is possible to include in a mass movement or what people are capable of doing. This will be a mass movement of a purely non-violent character."

Asked if he would court imprisonment this time, Mahatma Gandhi said "It is too soft a thing. There is no such thing as courting imprisonment this time.

My intention is to make it as short and swift as possible."

A P I.

37. This message is an eye opener for me. I have often suffered from misreporting or coloured epitomes of my writings and speeches even to the point of being lynched. This one, though not quite as bad, is bad enough. The above A.P. summary gives, if it does, the clue to the author's source for the misquotation and the additional sentences. If he used that source, the question arises why he went out of his way to use that doubtful and unauthorised source, when he had before him the authentic text of the full interview in 'Harijan' of 19th July last. He has made a most liberal, though disjointed and biased use of the columns of 'Harijan' for building up his case against me. At page 13 of the indictment he thus begins the charge culminating in the misquotation at page 14

"From this point onwards Mr Gandhi's conception of the struggle developed rapidly. His writings on the subject are too lengthy to quote in full, but the following excerpts from 'Harijan' illustrate the direction in which his mind was moving."

On the same page he has quoted passages from page 233 of 'Harijan' from the report of the interview in question. I am therefore entitled to conclude that the quotation under examination was taken from 'Harijan'. It is manifest now that it was not. Why not? If he took the three sentences from the afore-mentioned A.P. report, why has he quoted them without asterisks between the sentences that appear apart in the A.P. report? I may not pursue the inquiry any further. It has pained me deeply. How the two sentences not found in the authentic text of the interview found place in the A.P. summary I do not know. It is for the Government to inquire, if they will.

38. The author's quotation having been found wanting, the whole of his conclusions and inferences based upon it must fall to the ground. In my opinion therefore the Government does stand accused not only

of "having precipitated" but of having invited a crisis by their premeditated coup. The elaborate preparations they made for all-India arrests were not made overnight. It is wrong to draw a distinction between the Wardha resolution and the Bombay one in the sense that the first only 'threatened' and the second 'sanctioned' the mass civil disobedience. The first only required ratification by the all-India Congress Committee but the effect of either was the same, i.e., both authorised me to lead and guide the movement if negotiations failed. But the movement was not started by the resolution of 8th August last. Before I could function they arrested not only me but principal Congressmen all over India. Thus it was not I but the Government who started the movement and gave it a shape which I could not have dreamt of giving and which it never would have taken were I was conducting it. No doubt it would have been 'short and swift', not in the violent sense, as the author has insinuated but in the non-violent sense, as I know it. The Government made it very short and very swift by their very violent action. Had they given me breathing time, I would have sought an interview with the Viceroy and strained every nerve to show the reasonableness of the Congress demand. Thus, there were no "grounds", "good" or bad for believing, as the author would have one believe, that the "period of grace" was to be used for "putting the finishing touches to a plan to which its authors were already committed but which might not yet be completely ready to put into execution." In order to sustain such a belief it has become necessary for the author to dismiss from consideration the whole of the proceedings of the Bombay meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and seven vital parts of its resolution—save the clause referring to the mass movement—and the very awkward word "non violence" to which I shall come presently.

39 I give below extracts from my speeches and writings to show how eager and earnest I was to avoid

conflict and achieve the purpose by negotiation and to show that the Congress aim never was to thwart the Allies in any way.

" . . . It would be churlish on our part if we said 'we don't want to talk to anybody and we will by our own strong hearts expel the British. Then the Congress Committee won't be meeting, there would be no resolutions, and I should not be seeing press representatives."

(‘Harijan’, July 26th, 1942, page 243)

Q “Cannot there be any arbitration on the question of Independence?”

A “No, not on the question of Independence. It is possible only on questions on which sides may be taken. The outstanding question of Independence should be treated as common cause. It is only then that I can conceive possibility of arbitration on the Indo-British question. But if there is to be any arbitration—and I cannot logically say there should not, for if I did, it would be an arrogation of complete justice on my side—it can be done only if India's Independence is recognised.”

(‘Harijan’, May 24th, 1942, page 168)

An English correspondent “ Would you advocate arbitration for the Indo-British problem?”

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A “Any day. I suggested long ago that this question could be decided by arbitration.”

(‘Harijan’, May 24th, 1942, page 168)

The actual struggle does not commence this very moment. You have merely placed certain powers in my hands. My first act will be to wait upon His Excellency the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. This may take two or three weeks. What you are to do in the meanwhile? I will tell you. There is the spinning wheel. I had to struggle with the Maulana Saheb before it dawned upon him that in a non-violent struggle it had an abiding place. The fourteen-fold constructive programme

is all there for you to carry out But there is something more you have to do and it will give life to that programme Everyone of you should from this very moment consider yourself a free man or woman and even act as if you are free and no longer under the heel of this Imperialism This is no make-believe You have to cultivate the spirit of freedom, before it comes physically The chains of the slave are broken the moment he considers himself a free man He will then tell his master "I have been your slave all these days but I am no longer that now You may kill me, but if you do not and if you release me from the bondage, I will ask for nothing more from you For, henceforth instead of depending upon you I shall depend upon God for food and clothing God has given the urge of freedom and therefore I deem myself a free man"

You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom May be he will propose the abolition of the salt tax, the drink evil, etc, but I will say, "Nothing less than freedom"

Here is a Mantra—a short one—that I will give you You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it The Mantra is this "We shall do or die We shall either free India, or die in the attempt We shall not live to see the perpetuation of slavery" Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery Let that be your badge Dismiss jails out of your consideration If the Government leaves me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as

witness that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life shall gain it, he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the faint-hearted (From the concluding speech in Hindustani on 8th August before the AICC)

Let me tell you at the outset that the struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial, as I always do, and this time more than ever because the burden is so heavy. I have yet to continue to reason with those with whom I seem to have lost all credit for the time being. (From the concluding speech in English on 8th August before the A-ICC)

In the same connection I give extracts from the utterances of Maulana Saheb and others in the Appendix [*vide* Appendices V, VI, VII and VIII]

40 At page 11 of the indictment the author says:

"To summarise briefly, Mr Gandhi did not believe that non-violence alone was capable of defending India against Japan. Nor had he any faith in the ability of the Allies to do so. 'Britain', he stated in his draft Allahabad resolution, is incapable of defending India. His 'Quit India' move was intended to result in the withdrawal of the British Government to be succeeded by a problematical provisional government or, as Mr Gandhi admitted to be possible, by anarchy, the Indian army was to be disbanded and Allied troops were to be allowed to operate only under the terms imposed by this provisional Government, assisted by India's non-violent non-co-operation to Japan, for which, as Mr Gandhi had already admitted, there could be little scope with Allied troops operating in India. Finally, even if, in the face of the above arguments, it could be supposed that Mr Gandhi and the Congress proposed to pin their faith on the ability of Allied troops to defend India, it should be noted that the former himself admitted that the ability of Allied troops to

operate effectively would depend upon the formation of a suitable provisional Government. Now since this Government was to be representative of all sections of Indian opinion, it is clear that neither Mr Gandhi nor the Congress could legitimately commit it in advance to any particular course of action, they could not, that is to say, undertake that it would support the Allies in defending India against Japan. They could not in fact make any promise on behalf of this provisional Government unless they intended that it should be dominated by Congress, the whole trend of Congress policy however, coupled with the extravagant promises made in the Bombay A-I.C.C. resolution on behalf of this provisional Government, leave little doubt that this was their intention—a view held, significantly, by the Muslim League and Muslims in general. You have then a situation in which the Allied troops would be dependent for support on a Government dominated by a clique which has already been shown to be thoroughly defeatist in outlook, and whose leader had already expressed the intention of negotiating with Japan.

"It is not the intention here to examine the third aim, the establishment of communal unity followed by the formation of a provisional Government at all closely. It has been suggested in the preceding paragraph that the Congress intended this Government to be under their domination and a note has been made of the strength added to this view by the unity of Muslim opinion that the Congress move was aimed at establishing Congress-Hindu domination over India. It will suffice here to show, from Mr Gandhi's own writings, the doubts that he entertained as to the feasibility of establishing any such Government."

This brief summary is a perfect caricature of all I have said or written and the Congress has stood for and expressed in the resolution of 8th August last. I hope I have shown in the foregoing pages how cruelly I have been misrepresented. If my argument has failed to carry conviction, I should be quite content to be

judged on the strength of the quotations interspersed in the argument and those in the appendices hereto attached. As against the foregoing caricature, let me give a summary of my views on the quotations referred to above.

I I believe that non-violence alone is capable of defending India, not only against Japan but the whole world.

II I do hold that Britain is incapable of defending India. She is not defending India today, she is defending herself and her interests in India and elsewhere. These are often contrary to India's.

III "Quit India" move was intended to result in the withdrawal of British Power if possible with simultaneous formation of a provisional Government, consisting of members representing all the principal parties if the withdrawal took place by the willing consent of the British Government. If, however, the withdrawal took place willy-nilly there might be a period of anarchy.

IV The Indian Army would naturally be disbanded, being British creation—unless it forms part of Allied Powers and the free India Government.

V The Allied troops would remain under terms agreed to between the Allied Powers and the free India Government.

VI If India became free, the free India Government would tender co-operation by rendering such military aid as it could. But in the largest part of India where no military effort was possible, non-violent action will be taken by the masses of the people with the utmost enthusiasm.

41 Then the summary comes to the provisional Government. As to this, let the Congress resolution itself speak. I give the relevant parts below.

"The A-I C C, therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Na-

tions, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as non-violent forces at its command, together with its allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one with the largest measures of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"Lastly, whilst the A-I C C has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A-I C C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."

I claim that there is nothing in this clause of the resolution that is "extravagant" or impracticable. The concluding sentence proves in my opinion the sincerity and non-party character of the Congress. And as there is no party in the country which is not wholly anti-Fascist, anti-Nazi and anti-Japan it follows that a Government formed by these parties is bound to become an enthusiastic champion of the Allied cause.

which by the recognition of India as a free state will truly become the cause of democracy.

42 As to communal unity, it has been a fundamental plank with the Congress from its commencement. Its President is a Muslim divine of world-wide repute, especially in the Muslim world. It has besides him three Muslims on the Working Committee. It is surprising that the author has summoned to his assistance the Muslim League opinion. The League can afford to doubt the sincerity of Congress professions and accuse the Congress of the desire of establishing a "Congress-Hindu domination". It ill becomes the all powerful Government of India to take shelter under the Muslim League wing. This has a strong flavour of the old Imperial Mantra Divide and Rule. League-Congress differences are a purely domestic question. They are bound to be adjusted when foreign domination ends, if they are not dissolved sooner.

43 The author winds up the chapter as follows:

"Whether the authors of the resolution genuinely believed that the Congress demand would, if accepted, help rather than hinder the cause of the United Nations and intended that it should have the effect, depends on the answer to two questions. In the first place, could any body of men who honestly desired that result have deliberately called the country, if their way of achieving it was not accepted, to take part in a mass movement the declared object of which was to have precisely the opposite effect by paralysing the whole administration and the whole war effort? In the second place, bearing in mind that less than a year previously it had been proclaimed under Mr. Gandhi's orders to be a 'sin' to help the war with men or money, can it be denied that these men saw their opportunity in Britain's danger and believed that the psychological moment for the enforcement of their political demands must be seized while the fate of the United Nations hung in the balance and before the tide of war turned—if it was ever going to turn—in

their favour? The answer to these question is left to the reader "

I have to answer these two questions both as reader and accused As to the first question, there is no necessary inconsistency between the genuine belief that an acceptance of the Congress demand would help the cause of the United Nations, i e, of democracy all the world over and a mass movement (which moreover was merely contemplated) to paralyse the administration on non-acceptance of the Congress demand It is submitted that the attempt "to paralyse the administration" on non-acceptance proves the genuineness of the demand It sets the seal on its genuineness by Congressmen preparing to die in the attempt to paralyse an administration that thwarts their will to fight the combine against democracy Thus it is the administration's dead set against Congress which proves the hollowness of its claim that it is engaged in a fight for democracy My firm belief is that the administration is daily proving its inefficiency for handling the war in the right manner China is slowly pining away while the administration is playing at war-handling. In the attempt to suppress the Congress it has cut off the greatest source of help to the millions of China who are being ground down under the Japanese heel.

44 The second question hardly demands a separate answer Congressmen who proclaimed a year ago under my "orders" that it is a "sin" to help the war with "men or money" need not be considered here, if I give different "orders" For me, I am as much opposed to all war today as I was before a year or more I am but an individual All Congressmen are not of that mind The Congress will give up the policy of non-violence today, if it can achieve India's freedom by so doing And I would have no compunction about inviting those who seek my advice to throw themselves heart and soul into the effort to help themselves and thus deliver from bondage those nations that are wedded to democracy If that effort involves military training, the people will be free to take it, leaving me

and those who think with me our own non-violence. I did this very thing during the Boer War and during the last war I was a "good boy" then, because my action harmonised with the British Government's wishes. Today I am the arch enemy, not because I have changed but because the British Government which is being tried in the balance is being found wanting. I helped before, because I believed in British good faith. I appear to be hindering today because the British Government will not act up to the faith that was reposed in them. My answer to the two questions propounded by the author may sound harsh, but it is truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as God lets me see it.

45 The gravamen, however, of the charges against me is that "every reference to non-violence in the forecasts of the forms the movement would take made by Mr Gandhi and his Congress disciples and in the post-arrest programmes and instructions is nothing more than a pious hope or at best a mild warning which was known to have no practical value." It is also described as mere "lip service."

46 The author gives no proof to show that it (the warning) "was known to have no practical value." If the references to non-violence are removed from my writings and my utterances in order to condemn me and my "Congress disciples", the removal would be on a par with the omission of "nots" from the commandments and quoting them in support of killing, stealing, etc. The author in robbing me of the one thing I live by and live for robs me of all I possess. The evidence given in support of dismissing references to non-violence as "valueless" mostly consists of innuendoes. "It was to be a struggle, a fight to the finish in which foreign domination was to be ended, cost what it may." In a non-violent struggle the cost has always to be paid by the fighters in their own blood. "It was to be an unarmed revolt, short and swift." The prefix "un" in "unarmed", unless it be regarded as "valueless", gives "short and swift" an ennobling mean-

ing For, to make the struggle "short and swift" prisons have to be avoided as too soft a thing and death to be hugged as a true friend enabling the fighters to affect opponents' heart much quicker than mere jail going can Mention by me of "conflagration" meant 'giving' of lives in thousands or more, if need be The author has called it a "grimly accurate forecast" This has a 'post-facto' meaning unintended by the author in that a heavy toll of lives was taken by way of reprisals by the authorities, and an orgy of unmentionable excesses let loose upon the people by the soldiery and the police, if the press reports and statements by responsible public men are to be believed "Mr Gandhi was prepared to risk the occurrence of riots" It is true that I was prepared to take such a risk Any big movement whether violent or non-violent involves certain risks But non-violent running of risks means a special method, a special handling I would have strained every nerve to avoid riots Moreover, my first act would have been to woo the Viceroy Till then no question of running any risks could arise As it was, the Government would not let me run the risk They put me in prison instead! What the mass movement was to include and how the risk was to be taken, if at all, the author could not know for the movement was never started Nor had any instructions been issued by me

47 The author complains of my 'making full use of existing grievances' The use began even before the birth of the Congress It has never ceased How could it, so long as the foreign domination, of which they were a part, lasted?

48 "Finally every man and woman was to consider himself free and act for himself These last words or at least their sense finds a place in the resolution itself" This last sentence is a specimen of suppressio veri' Here is the relevant extract from the Congress resolution

"They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement A time may come when it

may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India."

There is nothing new or startling in this. It is practical wisdom. Men and women must become their own leaders when their trusted guides are removed from them, or when their organisation is declared illegal or otherwise ceases to function. True, there were formerly nominal "dictators" appointed. This was more to court arrest than to guide followers by being in touch with them. For, touch was not possible except secretly. This time not prison but death was to be sought in the prosecution of the movement. Therefore, everyone was to become his own leader to act within the four corners, of the square foundation—non-violence. The omission of the two conditions for everyone becoming his or her own guide was an unpardonable suppression of relevant truth.

49 The author then proceeds to consider whether the movement contemplated by me could, by its very nature, be non-violent and further whether "Mr Gandhi (I) intended that it should be so or hoped that it would remain so." I have already shown that the movement never having been started, nobody could say what I had contemplated or hoped unless my intention or my hope could be justly deduced from my writings. Let me however observe how the author has arrived at this conclusion. His first proof is that I have employed military terms in connection with a movement claimed to be wholly non-violent. I have employed such language from the commencement of my experiment in South Africa. I could more easily show the contrast between my move and the ordinary

ones by using identical phraseology, so far as possible, and coupling it with non-violence Throughout my experience of Satyagraha since 1908, I cannot recall an instance in which people were misled by me by my use of military phraseology And, indeed, Satyagraha being a "moral equivalent of war", the use of such terminology is but natural Probably all of us have used at some time or another, or are at least familiar with, expressions such as "Sword of the spirit", "dynamite of truth", "shield and buckler of patience", "assaulting the citadel of truth", or "wrestling with God" Yet no one has ever seen anything strange or wrong in such use Who can be ignorant of the use of military phraseology by the Salvation Army? That body has taken it over in its entirety, and yet I have not known any one having mistaken the Salvation Army with its colonels and captains for a military organisation trained to the use of deadly weapons of destruction

50 I must deny that "it has been shown that Mr Gandhi had little faith in the effectiveness of non-violence to resist Japanese aggression" What I have said is that maximum effectiveness cannot be shown when it has to work side by side with violence It is true that Maulana Saheb and Pandit Nehru have doubts about the efficacy of non-violence to withstand aggression but they have ample faith in non-violent action for fighting against British domination I do believe that both British and Japanese Imperialisms are equally to be avoided But I have already shown by quoting from 'Harijan' that it is easier to cope with the evil that is, than the one that may come [*vide* Appendix II (D)]

51 I admit at once that there is "a doubtful proportion of full believers" in my "theory of non-violence" But it should not be forgotten that I have also said that for my movement I do not at all need believers in the theory of non-violence, full or imperfect It is enough if people carry out the rules of non-violent action [*vide* Appendix IV (A)]

52 Now comes the author's most glaring lapse of memory or misrepresentation in the paragraph under discussion. He says, " . . . remember too that he had before him the example of his previous movements each professedly non-violent, yet each giving rise to the most hideous violence." I have before me a list of 20 civil resistance movements beginning with the very first in South Africa. I do recall instances in which popular frenzy had broken out resulting in regrettable murders. These instances of mob violence, though bad enough, were but a flea-bite in proportion to the vast size of this country—as big as Europe less Russia territorially and bigger numerically. Had violence been the Congress policy, secretly or openly, or had the Congress discipline been less strict, it is simple enough to realise that the violence, instead of being a flea-bite, would have been more like a volcanic eruption. But every time such outbreaks took place the most energetic measures were taken by the whole Congress organisation to deal with them. On several occasions I had myself resorted to fasting. All this produced a salutary effect on the popular mind. And there were also movements which were singularly free from violence. Thus the South African Satyagraha, which was a mass movement and similar movements in Champaran, Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad—not to mention others in which collective civil disobedience on a wide scale was offered—were wholly free from any outburst of violence. In all these the people had conformed to the rules laid down for their observance. The author has thus gone against history in making the sweeping statement that I had before me the 'example of previous movements each professedly non-violent, yet each giving rise to the most hideous violence.' My own experience being quite to the contrary, I have not the shadow of a doubt that if the Government had not by their summary action unnecessarily provoked the people beyond endurance, there never would have been any violence. The members of the Working Committee were anxious that violence on the part of the people

should be avoided, not from any philanthropic motive, but from the conviction borne in upon them from the experience of hard facts, that violence by the people could not usher in Independence. The education that the people had received through the Congress was wholly non-violent, before 1920, because of the Leaders' belief in constitutional agitation and faith in British promises and declarations, and since 1920, because of the belief, in the first instance induced by me and then enforced by experience, that mere constitutional agitation, though it had served up to a point, could never bring in Independence, and that regard being had to the condition of India, non-violent action was the only sanction through which independence could be attained in the quickest manner possible. The accumulated experience of the past thirty years, the first eight of which were in South Africa, fills me with the greatest hope that in the adoption of non-violence lies the future of India and the world. It is the most harmless and yet equally effective way of dealing with the political and economic wrongs of the down-trodden portion of humanity. I have known from early youth that non-violence is not a cloistered virtue to be practised by the individual for his peace and final salvation, but it is a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity and make progress towards the attainment of peace for which it has been yearning for ages past. It is therefore sad to think that a Government, the most powerful in the world, should have belittled the doctrine and put its votaries, however imperfect they may be, out of action. It is my firm opinion that thereby they have injured the cause of universal peace and the Allied Nations.

53 For the author "the certainty" was "that his (my) movement could not remain non-violent". For me "the certainty" was quite the contrary, if the movement had remained in the hands of those who could guide the people.

54 It is also now "clear" what I meant when I said I was prepared to go to the extremest limit, that

is that I would continue the non-violent movement even though the Government might succeed in provoking violence. Hitherto I have stayed my hand when people have been so provoked. This time I ran the risk because the risk of remaining supine in the face of the greatest world conflagration known to history was infinitely greater. If non-violence be the greatest force in the world, it must prove itself during the crisis.

55 The final proof given by the author of my non-violence being "mere lip service" consists of the following caricature of my writing in defence of Polish bravery —

"In other words in any fight the weaker of the two combatants may employ as violent measures as he likes or is able, and may still be considered to be fighting non-violently, or to put it in another way, violence when employed against superior odds automatically becomes non-violence. Surely a very convenient theory for the rebels in an "unarmed revolt."

I claim the writing quoted by the author does not warrant the misleading deduction. How can I possibly lay down a proposition against every day experience? There is rarely a fight among absolute equals. One party is always weaker than the other. The illustrations I have given, taken together, can lead to one conclusion only, namely, that the weaker party does not make any preparation for offering violence for the simple reason that the intention is absent, but when he is suddenly attacked he uses unconsciously, even without wishing to do so, any weapon that comes his way. The first illustration chosen by me is that of a man who having a sword uses it single-handed against a horde of dacoits. The second is that of a woman using her nails and teeth or even a dagger in defence of her honour. She acts spontaneously. And the third is that of a mouse fighting a cat with its sharp teeth. These three illustrations were specially chosen by me in order to avoid any illegitimate deduction being

drawn in defence of offering studied violence. One infallible test is that such a person is never successful in the sense of overpowering the aggressor. He or she dies and saves his or her honour rather than surrender to the demands of the aggressor. I was so guarded in the use of my language that I described the defence of the Poles against overwhelming numbers as "almost non-violence". In further elucidation of this see discussion with a Polish friend [vide Appendix IV (M)]

56 Here it will be apposite to give extracts from my speeches bearing on non-violence on the 7th and 8th August last before the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay —

"Let me, however, hasten to assure you that I am the same Gandhi as I was in 1920. I have not changed in any fundamental respect. I attach the same importance to non-violence that I did then. If at all, my emphasis on it has grown stronger. There is no real contradiction between the present resolution and my previous writings and utterances. Occasions like the present do not occur in everybody's and but rarely in anybody's life. I want you to know and I feel that there is nothing but purest 'ahimsa' in all that I am saying and doing today. The draft resolution of the Working Committee is based on 'ahimsa', the contemplated struggle similarly has its roots in 'ahimsa'. If therefore there is any among you who has lost faith in 'ahimsa' or is wearied of it, let him not vote for this resolution.

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Let me explain my position clearly. God has vouchsafed to me a priceless gift in the weapon of 'ahimsa'. I and my 'ahimsa' are on our trial today. If in the present crisis, when the earth is being scorched by the flames of 'himsa' and crying for deliverance, I failed to make use of the God-given talent, God will not forgive me and I shall be adjudged unworthy of the great gift. I must act now. I may not hesitate.

and merely look on when Russia and China are threatened

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Ours is not a drive for power but purely a non-violent fight for India's independence. In a violent struggle a successful general has been often known to effect a military coup and set up a dictatorship. But under the Congress scheme of things, essentially non-violent as it is, there can be no room for dictatorship. A non-violent soldier of freedom will covet nothing for himself, he fights only for the freedom of his country. The Congress is unconcerned as to who will rule when freedom is attained. The power, when it comes, will belong to the people of India, and it will be for them to decide to whom it should be entrusted. May be that the reins will be placed in the hands of the Parsis for instance—as I would love to see happen or they may be handed to some others whose names are not heard in the Congress today. It will not be for you then to object saying, "This community is microscopic. That party did not play its due part in the freedom's struggle, why should it have all the power?" Ever since its inception the Congress has kept itself meticulously free of the communal taint. It has thought always in terms of the whole nation and acted accordingly.

I know how imperfect our 'ahimsa' is and how far away we are still from the ideal, but in 'ahimsa' there is no final failure or defeat. I have faith therefore that if, in spite of our shortcomings, the big thing does happen, it will be because God wanted to help us by crowning with success our silent, unremitting 'sadhana' (striving) for the last twenty-two years.

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I believe that in the history of the world there has not been a more genuinely democratic struggle for freedom than ours. I read Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution" while I was in prison, and Pandit Jawaharlal has told me something about the

Russian revolution But it is my conviction that inasmuch as these struggles were fought with the weapon of violence they failed to realise the democratic ideal In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all Everybody will be his own master It is to join a struggle for such democracy that I invite you today Once you realise this you will forget the differences between Hindus and Muslims and think of yourselves as Indians only, engaged in the common struggle for independence" (From the Hindustani speech on 7th August before the All-India Congress Committee)

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After describing personal relations with the Viceroy, the late Deenabandhu C F Andrews and the Metropolitan of Calcutta, I proceeded

With the background of this consciousness I want to declare to the world that whatever may be said to the contrary and although I may have today forfeited the regard of many friends in the West and even the trust of some even for their love and friendship I must not suppress the voice within That something in me which has never deceived me tells me that I shall have to fight on even though the whole world be against me

* * *

I hold that there can be no real freedom without non-violence This is not the language of a proud or an arrogant man but of an earnest seeker after truth It is this fundamental truth with which the Congress has been experimenting for the last twenty-two years Unconsciously, from its very inception the Congress has based its policy on non-violence known in those early days as the constitutional method Dadabhoi and Pherozeshah Mehta carried Congress India with them They were lovers of Congress They were, therefore, also its masters But above all, they were true servants of the nation They became rebels

But they never countenanced murder, secrecy and the like. Subsequent generations have added to this heritage and expanded their political philosophy into the principle and policy of non-violent non-co-operation which the Congress has adopted. It is not my claim that every Congressman conforms to the highest tenet of non-violence even as a policy. I know that there are several black sheep, but I am taking all on trust without subjecting them to cross-examination. I trust, because I have faith in the innate goodness of human nature which enables people instinctively to perceive the truth and carries them through crisis. It is this fundamental trust which rules my life, and enables me to hope that India as a whole will vindicate the principle of non-violence during the coming struggle. But even if my trust is found to be misplaced I shall not flinch. I shall not abandon my faith. I shall only say, "The lesson is not yet fully learnt. I must try again."

(From the English speech on 8th August)

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The Congress has no sanction but the moral for enforcing its decisions. I believe that true democracy can only be an outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs. Solution of the Hindu-Muslim question too, cannot be achieved by resort to violence. If Hindus tyrannise over Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that the Congress has agreed to submit all differences to an impartial tribunal and to abide by its decisions.

In 'Satyagraha' there is no place for fraud or falsehood. Fraud and falsehood are today stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness of such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to the extent it was

possible for a human being to do so. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this Empire, which is built on and upheld by untruth and violence. However tight the Empire's control of us, we must get out of it. I know how imperfect an instrument I am for this great task, and how imperfect is the material with which I have to work. But how can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under a bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet inactive in the midst of this conflagration which is enveloping the whole world, God will take me to task, for not making use of the treasure He has given me. But for this conflagration, I should have asked you to wait a little longer, as I have done all these years. The situation has now become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it. (From the concluding speech in Hindustani on 8th August)

57 Having given proof against me to show that my professions about non-violence were "valueless", the author turns to my colleagues in the Congress High Command to observe how they interpreted my 'views to their Congress followers and to the masses'. The author sees objection in Pandit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Shankerrao Deo having singled out the student community for attention. Attention paid to the student community and peasantry was no new thing introduced for the first time, for the sake of the struggle, in the history of the Congress. As early as 1920 students were specially invited to join the non-co-operation movement and several thousand had responded to the call by suspending their studies. I do not know what happened after the August arrests, in the Benares Hindu University. But assuming that some students belonging to it went astray, that is no ground for associating Pandit Nehru with their acts. Positive proof would be necessary to establish such connection. Overwhelming proof can be produced in support of the contention that his faith in non-violence for the purpose of achieving 'Swaraj'

is inferior to nobody's. The same thing can be said about his exhortation to the 'Kisans' of the United Provinces. There is too nothing in favour of violence in the other leaders' speeches so far as one can judge from the extracts given in the indictment.

58 Having dealt with the leaders' speeches, the the author comes to "detailed instructions regarding the conduct of the movement in existence before the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay". The "first example" has been "chosen" from 'Harijan' of August 9th. The article is entitled "Ways of non-violent non-co-operation". As it happens, it is a discussion in connection with the threatened invasion from Japan. Thus the article opens —

"Ever since 1920 we are familiar with some of the ways of offering non-violent non-co-operation. These included boycott of all Government institutions and services and extended to the non-payment of taxes. They were directed against a foreign Government in occupation of the country for years. The ways of non-co-operation to adopt against a new foreign invader would naturally differ in details. It would as Gandhiji has said extend to the refusal of food or water. All non-co-operation calculated to make the functioning of the enemy impossible has to be resorted to within the limits of non-violence."

Then the writer of the article (M D) has given samples of non-violent non-co-operation offered elsewhere than in India. They are not examples of non-violence consciously exercised. That the whole article was written to show what could be non-violently done to repel the invader, is clear from the final paragraph.

"What one has to remember is that in war repression would be ten times as severe as was resorted to in France, but if there is the will to suffer, the resourcefulness to devise ways and means on the lines indicated in these different instances of passive resistance, and above all the determination to drive out the invader, cost what it may, victory is certain. The vastness of

our country, far from being a disadvantage, may be an advantage, as the invader would find it difficult to cope with resistance on a thousand and one fronts"

The theme of the article is not racial but anti-invader

59 The other example given by the author is an extract from an article by Shri K G Mashruwala in 'Harijan' of 23rd August 1942. Shri Mashruwalla is a valued co-worker. He carries non-violence to an extreme which baffles those who know him intimately. Nevertheless I do not propose to defend the paragraph quoted. He has guarded himself by saying that it represents his personal opinion only. He must have heard me debating the question whether interference with bridges, rails and the like could be classified as non-violent. I had always questioned the practicability of the interference being non-violent. Even if such interference could conceivably be non-violent, as I hold it can be, it is dangerous to put it before the masses who cannot be expected to do such things non-violently. Nor would I expect the classification of the British Power in the same category as the Japanese for the purposes of the movement.

60 Having allowed myself to criticise the opinion of a respected colleague I wish to say that Shri Mashruwalla's opinion is no evidence of violent intention. At best it is an error of judgment which is much more likely in a novel subject like the applicability of 'ahimsa' practised in all walks of life by masses of mankind. Great generals and statesmen have been known before now to have committed errors of judgment without losing caste or being accused of evil intentions.

61 Then comes the Andhra circular. I must regard it as forbidden ground for me inasmuch as I knew nothing about it before my arrest. Therefore, I can only comment on it with reserve. Subject to that caution I consider the document to be harmless on the whole. This is its governing clause --

"The whole movement is based on non-violence. No act which contravenes these instructions should even be undertaken. All acts of disobedience committed should be overt never covert (open but not under cover)"

The parenthesis is in the original. The following warning is also embodied in the circular.—

"Ninety-nine chances out of hundred chances are for the inauguration of this movement by Mahatmaji at an early date, possibly a few hours after the next All-India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay. The DCCs should be alert and begin to act immediately, but please also take note that no movement should be launched or any overt act done till Mahatmaji decides. After all he may decide otherwise and you will be responsible for a great unwarranted mistake. Be ready, organise at once, be alert, but by no means act."

As to the body of the circular, I could not make myself responsible for some of the items. But I must refuse to judge a thing which I cannot correct, especially in the absence of what the Committee has to say on them, assuming of course that the circular is an authentic document. I miss in the indictment the text of the alleged "written amendment" "raising" the ban on the removal of rails.

62 Attention is then drawn to the fifth appendix showing how my mind was working in the direction of violence under the "valueless" cover of non-violence, as the author would say. The appendix gives what purport to be All-India Congress Committee instructions with extracts from my writings in parallel columns. I have tried to study that appendix. I have nothing to withdraw from writings. And I contend that there is not a trace of violence in the instructions alleged to be from the All-India Congress Committee.

63 Independently of the argument in the indictment, I must now say something about non-violence as I know it. Its spread in all walks of life has been my mission from early youth. This covers a period of

very nearly sixty years. It was adopted at my instance as a policy by the Congress in 1920. In its very nature it was not meant to be paraded before the world, but it was accepted as a means indispensable for the attainment of 'Swaraj'. Congressmen saw at an early date that its mere adoption on paper had no value. It was of use only in so far as it was put into practice individually and collectively. It was of no more use as a badge than a rifle in the hands of a person who did not know how to use it effectively on due occasion. Therefore if non-violence has raised the Congress prestige and popularity since its adoption it has done so in exact proportion to its use, even as the power which the rifle gives to its possessor is in exact proportion to its effective use. The comparison cannot be carried very far. Thus while violence is directed towards the injury, including the destruction of the aggressor, and is successful only when it is stronger than that of the opponent, non-violent action can be taken in respect of an opponent, however powerfully organised for violence. Violence *per se* of the weak has never been known to succeed against the stronger in violence. Success of non-violent action of the very weak is a daily occurrence. I make bold to say that I have applied to the present struggle the principles of non-violence as enunciated here. Nothing could be farther from my thought than injury to the person or property of those who are manning and regulating the machinery of British Imperialism as it operates in India. My non-violence draws a fundamental distinction between the man and his machine. I would destroy a harmful machine without compunction, never the man. And this rule I have enforced in my dealings with my nearest relatives as also friends and associates, not without considerable success.

64 After disposing of non-violence the author has summarised what he calls the "ostensible aims" of the Wardha resolution of July 14th and the Bombay resolution of August 8th as follows

“Three main ‘ostensible’ aims are common to both the Wardha resolution of July 14th (Appendix III-1) and the Bombay resolution of August 8th (Appendix III-2) These are —

(1) To remove foreign domination over India

(2) To check the growing ill-will against Britain, with its danger of passive acceptance by the masses of aggression against India, to build up a spirit of resistance to aggression among Indians, and by granting India’s millions immediate freedom to release that energy and enthusiasm which alone can enable India to play an effective part in her own defence and in the war as a whole

(3) To achieve unity by the removal of the foreign power with its policy of divide and rule, which will be followed by the formation of a Provisional Government representative of all sections of the Indian people

Three further aims appeared for the first time in the Bombay resolution —

(4) To bring all subject and oppressed humanity to the side of the United Nations, thus giving these nations the moral and spiritual leadership of the world

(5) To assist Asiatic nations under foreign domination to regain their freedom and to ensure that they are not again placed under the rule of any colonial power

(6) To bring about world federation, which would ensure the disbanding of national armies, navies and air forces, and the pooling of the world’s resources for the common good of all”

He says that “the genuineness of the first of these aims is undeniable The freedom of India, in whatever terms it may have been expressed, has long been the main goal of the Congress and it has been shown above how this aim coincides with one of the main motives underlying the ‘Quit India’ move” Strange as it appears to me, notwithstanding this admission of the genuineness of the first aim, he ridicules the others

in some shape or form I contend that all the others follow from the first. Thus if the foreign domination goes by agreement, ill-will against Britain is automatically turned into goodwill, and the energy of millions is set free on behalf of the Allied cause. Similarly communal unity must follow as day follows night when the night of foreign domination is gone. If nearly four hundred million people become free, other portions of oppressed humanity must also become free and naturally the Allied Nations being privy to this freedom, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world comes to them without seeking. The fifth aim is included in the fourth, and the sixth is but a repetition of the aim of the whole of humanity which it must attain or perish without. It is true that the three last aims were added in Bombay. That surely is not a matter to cavil at. Even if they were a result of criticism, what is there wrong about it? No democratic organisation can afford to defy criticism, for it has to live upon the fresh air of criticism. As a matter of fact, however, world federation and rights of non-white people are no new ideas for Congressmen. They have been mentioned in Congress resolutions on other occasions. The paragraph about world federation found place in the August resolution at the instance of a European friend, and about non-white people at mine.

65 As to the disturbances that took place after the arrests of 9th August I have carefully read Chapter IV and V of the indictment detailing them as also the appendices purporting to be instructions from various bodies. I must refuse to judge these one-sided statements or unverified documents. As to the so-called instructions, I can say that, so far as they are contrary to non-violence, they can never have my approval.

66 One searches in vain in the indictment for a detailed account of the measures taken by the Government by way of reprisals. And if one is to believe what has been allowed to appear in the Press about these measures, the so-called misdeeds of exasperated

people, whether they can be described as Congressmen or not, pale into insignificance

67 Now for the responsibility for the happenings after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last. The most natural way to look at the disturbances is that they broke out after the arrests which were therefore the cause. The indictment has been framed for the sole purpose, as the title shows, of fastening the responsibility on the Congress. The argument seems to me to be this. First I and then the Congress had been setting the stage for a mass movement since April 1942 when I first bruited the idea of British withdrawal popularly known as "Quit India." Mass movement was bound to result in the outbreak of violence. I and the Congressmen who had accepted my guidance had intended that violence should take place. Leaders had been preaching it. Hence the disturbances were to take place in any case. The arrest therefore merely anticipated the violent movement and nipped it in the bud. This sums up the reasoning in the indictment.

68 I have endeavoured to show that no special stage for a mass movement was set or contemplated because of my proposal for British withdrawal, that violence was never contemplated by me or any Congress leader, that I had declared that, if Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence, they might not find me alive in their midst, that the mass movement was never started by me, the sole charge for starting it was vested in me, that I had contemplated negotiations and with the Government, that I was to start the movement only on failure of negotiations and that I had envisaged an interval of "two or three weeks" for the negotiations. It is therefore clear that but for the arrests no such disturbances would have taken place as happened on 9th August last and after. I would have strained every nerve first to make the negotiations successful and secondly, if I had failed, to avoid disturbances. The Government would have been no less able to suppress them than they were in August last. Only they would have had some case against

me and the Congress. It was the duty of the Government, before taking action, to study the speeches of the Congress leaders and myself at the All-India Congress Committee meeting.

69 The Congress leaders were desirous that the movement should remain non-violent, if only because they knew that no violent movement in the existing circumstances could possibly succeed when matched against a most powerfully equipped Government. Whatever violence was committed by people, whether Congressmen or others, was therefore committed in spite of the leaders' wishes. If it is held otherwise by the Government it should be proved beyond doubt before an impartial tribunal. But why seek to shift the responsibility when the cause is patent? The Government action in enforcing India-wide arrests was so violent that the populace which was in sympathy with the Congress lost self-control. The loss of self-control cannot imply Congress complicity but it does imply that the power of endurance of human nature has limitations. If Government action was in excess of the endurance of human nature, it and therefore its authors were responsible for the explosions that followed. But the Government may assert that the arrests were unnecessary. If so, why should the Government fight shy of taking the responsibility for the consequences of their action? The wonder to me is that the Government at all need to justify their action when they know their will is law.

70 Let me analyse the system of Government in vogue here. A population numbering nearly four hundred millions of people, belonging to an ancient civilisation, are being ruled by a British representative called Viceroy and Governor-General aided by 250 officials called Collectors and supported by a strong British garrison with a large number of Indian soldiers, trained by British officers, and carefully isolated from the populace. The Viceroy enjoys within his own sphere powers much larger than the King of England. Such powers, as far as I know, are not enjoyed by any

other person in the world. The Collectors are miniature Viceroys in their own spheres. They are first and foremost, as their name implies, collectors of revenue in their own districts and have magisterial powers. They can requisition the military to their aid when they think necessary. They are also political agents for the small chieftains within their jurisdiction, and they are in the place of overlords to them.

71 Contrast this with the Congress, the most truly democratic organisation in the world—not because of its numerical strength, but because its only sanction deliberately adopted is non-violence. From its inception the Congress has been a democratic body, seeking to represent all India. However feeble and imperfect the attempt may have been, the Congress has never in its history of now nearly sixty years shifted its gaze from the Pole Star of India's freedom. It has progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the truest term. If it is said, as it has been, that the Congress learnt the spirit of democracy from Great Britain, no Congressman would care to deny the statement, though it must be added that the roots were to be found in the old Panchayat system. It can never brook Nazi, Fascist or Japanese domination. An organisation whose very breath is freedom and which pits itself against the most powerfully organised Imperialism will perish to a man in the attempt to resist all domination. So long as it clings to non-violence, it will be uncrushable and unconquerable.

72 What can be the cause of the extraordinary resentment against the Congress into which the Government have betrayed themselves? I have never known them before to exhibit so much irritation. Does the cause lie in the "Quit India" formula? Disturbances cannot be the cause, because the resentment began to show itself soon after the publication of my proposal for British withdrawal. It crystallized into the wholesale arrests of 9th August last which were pre-arranged and merely awaited the passing of the resolu-

tion of 8th August Yet there was nothing novel in the resolution save the "Quit India" formula Mass movements have been known to be on the Congress programme ever since 1920 But freedom seemed elusive Now the Hindu-Muslim disunity, now the pledges to the Princes, now the interests of the scheduled classes, now the vested interests of Europeans barred the gateway to freedom. Divide and Rule was an inexhaustible well The sands of time were running out Rivers of blood were flowing fast among the warring nations, and politically-minded India was looking on helplessly—the masses were inert Hence the cry of "Quit India" It gave body to the freedom movement The cry was unanswerable Those who were anxious to play their part in the world crisis found vent in that cry of anguish Its root is in the will to save democracy from Nazism as well as Imperialism For, satisfaction of the Congress demand meant assurance of victory of democracy over any combination of reactionary forces and deliverance of China and Russia from the menace of Japan and Germany respectively But the demand irritated the Government They distrusted those who were associated with the demand and thereby they themselves became the greatest impediment to the war effort It is wrong therefore to accuse the Congress of hindering war effort Congress activity up to the night of 8th August was confined to resolutions only The dawn of the 9th saw the Congress imprisoned What followed was a direct result of the Government action

73 The resentment over what I hold to be a just and honourable desire confirms the popular suspicion about the 'bona fides' of the Government's professions about democracy and freedom after the war If the Government were sincere they would have welcomed the offer of help made by the Congress Congressmen who have been fighting for India's liberty for over half a century would have flocked to the Allied banner as one man for the defence of India's freedom newly won But the Government did not wish to treat India

as an equal partner and ally. They put out of action those who made this demand. Some of them are even being hounded as if they were dangerous criminals. I have in mind Shri Jaiprakash Narayan and other like him. A reward of Rs 5,000 now doubled, has been promised to the informant who would show his hiding place. I have taken Shri Jaiprakash Narayan purposely as my illustration because, as he very rightly says, he differs from me on several fundamentals. But my differences, great as they are, do not blind me to his indomitable courage and his sacrifices of all that a man holds dear for the love of his country. I have read his manifesto which is given as an appendix to the indictment. Though I cannot subscribe to some of the views expressed therein, it breathes nothing but burning patriotism and his impatience of foreign domination. It is a virtue of which any country would be proud.

74 So much for politically-minded Congressmen. In the constructive department of the Congress also the Government have deprived themselves of the best talent in the country for the organisation of hand industries which are so vital a need in war time. The All-India Spinners' Association, which is responsible for having distributed without fuss over 3 crores of rupees as wages among the poor villagers whom no one had reached and whose labour was being wasted, has come in for a heavy hand. Its President Shri Jajaji and many of his co-workers have been imprisoned without trial and without any known reason. Khadi centres which are trust property have been confiscated to the Government. I do not know the law under which such property can be confiscated. And the tragedy is that the confiscators are themselves unable to run these centres which were producing and distributing cloth. Khadi and 'charkhas' have been reported to have been burnt by the authorities. The All-India Village Industries Association worked by Kumarappa brothers has also received much the same treatment. Shri Vinoba Bhave is an institution by himself. Many

workers were incessantly doing creative labour under his guidance. Most men and women of constructive organisations are not political workers. They are devoted to constructive work of the highest merit. And if some of them have found it necessary to appear at all on the political field, it is a matter for the Government to reflect upon. To put such organisations and their supervisors under duress is in my opinion an unpardonable interference with war effort. The self-satisfaction with which the highest officials proclaim that limitless men and material are being had from this unhappy land, is truly amazing, while the inhabitants of India are suffering from shortage of food, clothing and many other necessities of life. I make bold to say that this scarcity would have been largely minimised if not altogether obviated, if instead of imprisoning Congress workers throughout India, the Government had utilised their services. The Government had two striking illustrations of the efficient working by the Congress agency—I mean the handling of the disastrous Bihar earthquake by Congressmen under Dr Rajendra Prasad and of the equally disastrous flood in Gujarat under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

75 This brings me to the end of my reply to the indictment. It has become much longer than I had wanted to make it. It has cost me and my co-workers in the camp no end of labour. Although I must ask in fairness to myself and the cause I represent, for the publication of this reply, my chief purpose is to call conviction to the Government that the indictment contains no proof of the allegations against the Congress and me. The Government know that the public in India seem to have distrusted the indictment and regarded it as designed for foreign propaganda. Men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Rt Hon Shri M R Jayakar have given their opinion that the "evidence" produced in the indictment is of no judicial value. Therefore the Government should withdraw the indictment. I see from the preface to the indictment that the Government have in their possession

“valuable evidence”, presumably incriminating the detenus I submit that if the Government cannot safely divulge the evidence, they should discharge the detenus and bring to book those, who after discharge, may be caught in the act of committing or promoting crimes With limitless power at their back, they need not resort to unsustainable accusations

76 It will be noticed that although the indictment is a Government publication, I have only criticised its unknown author in the fond hope that the individual members composing the Government of India have not read the originals on which it is based For, I am of opinion that no one having a knowledge of the originals could possibly endorse the inferences and innuendoes with which it is replete

77 Lastly, I wish to state that if I have anywhere erred in analysing the indictment, and if my error is pointed out to me, I shall gladly correct myself I have simply written as I have felt

I am, &c ,
M K GANDHI

MAHATMA'S LETTER TO QAID-E-AZAM

Which was not delivered.

DELENTION CAMP, May 4, 1943

Dear Qaid-e-Azam,

When sometime after my incarceration Government asked me for a list of newspapers I would like to have, I included "Dawn" in my list I have been receiving it with more or less regularity Whenever it comes to me I read it carefully I have followed the proceedings of the League as reported in the "Dawn" columns I noted your invitation to me to write to you Hence this letter

I welcome your invitation I suggest our meeting face to face rather than talking through correspondence But I am in your hands

I hope that this letter will be sent to you and if you agree to my proposal, the Government will let you visit me

One thing I had better mention There seems to be an "if" about your invitation Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts

I would like you to take me as I am

Why should not both you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or interested in it?

Yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

The following Press communique was issued by the Government of India, on May 26, 1943

The Government of India have received a request from Mr Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him. In accordance with their known policy in regard to correspondence or interviews with Mr Gandhi, the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement which he has not disavowed and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time. It rests with Mr Gandhi to satisfy the Government of India that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in the public affairs of the country, and until he does so the disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice.

The following version of the League speech of Mr Jinnah was circulated by the 'Associated Press of India' when the Government of India stopped Mahatma Gandhi's letter to him.

Nobody would welcome it more than myself if Mr Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan. Let me tell you that it will be the greatest day both for the Hindus and Muslims. If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr Gandhi from writing direct to me? He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct? What is the use of going to the Viceroy and leading deputations and carrying on correspondence? Who is to prevent Mr Gandhi today? I cannot believe for a single moment strong as this Government may be in this country—you may say anything you like against this Government. I cannot believe that they will have the daring to stop such a letter if it is sent to me. It will be a very serious thing indeed if such a thing is done by the Government. But I do not see evidence of any kind of change of policy on the part of Mr Gandhi or Congress leadership.

April 22 The Federal Court of India delivered a judgment holding that Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules under which the prominent Congress Leaders were detained was *ultra vires* and, therefore, invalid

June 18

The appointment of Lord Wavell as Governor-General of India after Lord Linlithgow was announced He was not a peer then

June 24

Mr Amery made a statement reaffirming the pledge to India, which was contained in the Cripps proposals

June 30

Mr Churchill in a Guildhall meeting said

"In the vast subcontinent of India which, we trust, will presently find full satisfaction within the British Commonwealth of Nations, the martial races and many others have thronged to the Imperial standard"

Correspondence regarding

WITHDRAWAL OF AUGUST 8 RESOLUTION

To

The Additional Secretary, Home Dept,
Government of India

July 16th, 1943

Sir,

I observe from the daily papers that there is a persistent rumour going the round that I have written to H E the Viceroy withdrawing the A-I C C Resolution of 8th August last I observe too that much speculation is being built upon the rumour I suggest that the Government should issue a contradiction of the rumour For I have neither the authority nor the wish to withdraw the resolution My personal opinion is that the resolution was the only one the A I C C could have passed, if the Congress was to make any effective contribution to the cause of human freedom which is involved in the immediate independence of India

I am etc,
M K GANDHI

July 29, 1943 Home Department

Sir,

In reply to your letter of 16th July, I am directed to inform you that the Government of India do not think it necessary to issue a contradiction of the rumour to which you refer

I am, etc,
R TOTTENHAM

RIGID ISOLATION OF GANDHIJI

LONDON, July 29, 1943

Mr Amery gave a negative reply to the question by Mr Sorensen asking whether Mr Gandhi had asked permission or made any attempt to write to the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India, since last March, and whether the Viceroy or the Secretary of State had communicated with Mr Gandhi or any Congress leader Mr Amery added

"Letters have, however, passed from time to time between Mr Gandhi and the Home Department of the Government of India, but I am not prepared to disclose their number or contents"

Mr Sorensen May we have no idea whether the communications were of a political nature making any representations or expressing any protest?

Mr Amery No In view of the circumstances of Mr Gandhi's arrest, the Government of India have decided that he should not be afforded any opportunity of expressing or conveying his views to the public either in India or in this country

Mr Sorensen How can anyone in this country know what particular views Mr Gandhi has regarding the present situation?

Mr Amery It is not desired that they should

MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU

No change in Congress creed

HYDERABAD (Dn), August 9, 1943

Mrs Sarojini Naidu, a member of the Congress Working Committee, who was recently released from detention on account of ill-health, in a statement to the Press on the occasion of the first anniversary of the arrest of Congress leaders observes

"Following the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and of the Working Committee there seems to have arisen some confusion of ideas and some conflict of opinion among the Congress workers who were suddenly left without a definite mandate or any recognised leadership I wish to clear any lingering doubts by stating that no authority was delegated either by the Working Committee or by the All-India Congress Committee to any individual or groups within the Congress to issue manifestos or evolve new policies in the name of the Congress, nor, as has been sometimes alleged, but which I am loath to believe, to further secret activities directly opposed to the accepted creed and traditions of the Congress

"Neither is it open to any member of the Congress to amend its constitution or alter its decision at this juncture Nevertheless in the absence of the leaders, it is equally the responsibility of all of us to continue without interruption on our own part the authentic work of the Congress in the service of the country Spectacular programmes assuredly have their special place and purpose in the scheme of national life, but today they can have but a limited and doubtful value, confronted as we are with problems that demand a supreme and undivided dedication of all national thought for their solution.

"The heart-breaking and universal misery of the people cries out to us from myriad mouths of hunger and not one of us dare be deaf to that poignant call

for help. Though I am still too ill to take any active share in the beneficent work of relief, I am in daily contact with the work of the unofficial committee in Hyderabad for relief, I am for that reason increasingly conscious of the desperate agony of the poor and increasingly certain that the paramount, indeed, at present almost the sole task before us, is to try and bring some measure of succour and solace to ameliorate their desperate plight.

"Also from my daily experience, I can bear testimony to the splendid manner in which instinctively and automatically sectarian interests, communal quarrels and political controversies subordinate themselves before a great human claim that transcends all lesser considerations. An enduring national unity can only be built up on the foundation of sincere co-operation in the service of the people.

"The initial and ultimate word of inspiration was uttered by our own illustrious leader, Mahatma Gandhi, when, in a prophetic mood, he said as long ago as 1921 that 'before the hungry even God dare not appear except in the shape of bread'."

September 4, 1943

Mr C R Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, in a speech at Carmarthen said

"If the British Commonwealth and Empire was reviewed, it would be found that the greatest obstacle to full self-government was not the unwillingness of Great Britain to part with the right of deciding other peoples' affairs but the inability of communities to settle their own differences. India is perhaps an outstanding example. Nothing stands in the way of the attainment of complete self-government by the Indian 'peoples' save the rooted mutual distrust of the different communities."

TOTTENHAM TO GANDHIJI

HOME DEPARTMENT,

October 14th, 1943

Sir,

I am directed to reply to your letter of the 15th July in which you have attempted to controvert certain passages appearing in the Government publication "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43". At the outset I am to remind you that the document in question was published for the information of the public and not for the purpose of convincing you or eliciting your defence. It was supplied to you only at your own request and in forwarding it Government neither invited nor desired your comments upon it. Since, however, you have thought fit to address Government on the subject, I am to say that Government have given due consideration to your letter.

2 Government regret to observe that, although your letter contains lengthy quotations from your own utterances and writings, it contains no fresh or categorical statement of your own attitude in regard to the material issues or any clear repudiation of the disastrous policy to which you and the Congress party committed yourselves in the series of events leading up to the Congress resolution of the 8th August, 1942. The purpose of your letter appears to be to suggest that you have been misrepresented in some way in "Congress Responsibility", but in what substantial respect is not clear. No attempt was made in the book, as you seem to think, to charge you with pro-Japanese sympathies and the sentence at the end of the first chapter, to which you have taken exception in paragraph 18 of your letter, was merely an echo of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's own words quoted on the previous page. He has not, as you wrongly allege, repudiated those words in the published statement to which you refer. It was, however, one of the purposes of the book to find an explanation of your actions in your own defeatist

outlook towards the threat from Japan and your fear that, unless the Allied Forces withdrew in time, India would become a battlefield in which the Japanese would ultimately win. This feeling was attributed to you by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself in the course of his remarks to which reference has been made above and your own draft of the Allahabad resolution makes it plain that, both in the "Quit India" campaign and the Congress resolution which was intended to enforce it, your object was to be left in a position in which you and the Congress would be free to make terms with Japan. The Government of India note that your letter makes no attempt to meet this imputation, which they still regard as true. It is the only explanation which is consistent with your own statement that "the presence of the British in India is an invitation to the Japanese to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait." Nor have you been able to explain on any theory other than that suggested in the book the contradiction between this statement and your subsequent avowal of your willingness to permit the retention of the Allied troops on Indian soil.

3 The Government of India are not disposed to follow you into the various verbal points that you have raised. They do not deny that owing to your habit of reinterpreting your own statements to suit the purposes of the moment it is easy for you to quote passages from your utterances or writings which are in apparent contradiction to any view attributed to you. But the fact that you admit the discovery of important gaps in them, or that you have found it necessary from time to time to put glosses on what you have said, is itself evidence of the incredible levity with which, in a moment of grave crisis, you made pronouncements in regard to matters of the most vital importance to India's defences and her internal peace. Government can only interpret your statements in the plain sense of the words as it would appear to any honest or unbiassed reader and they are satisfied that the book "Congress Responsibility" contains no ma-

terial misrepresentation of the general trend of your utterances during the relevant period

4 You have devoted considerable space in your letter to an apparent attempt to disown the phrase attributed to you in the A P I report of a press conference which you held at Wardha on the 14th July 1942, where you are reported to have said "There is no question of one more chance After all it is an open rebellion" This press message was reproduced at the time in newspapers throughout India You now wish the Government of India to believe that you first became aware of it on the 26th June, 1943 They can only regard it as highly improbable that if it did not correctly represent what you said, it should not have been brought to your notice at the time or that you should have left it uncontradicted during the following weeks while you were still at liberty

5 The Government of India also note that you still seek to cast on the Government the responsibility for the disturbances for reasons which they can only regard as trivial and which have already been answered in your published correspondence with His Excellency the Viceroy The point which is clearly established by the book "Congress Responsibility" is that those disturbances were the natural and predictable consequences of your declaration of an "open rebellion" and the propaganda which preceded it That you yourself could have foreseen those consequences is clear from the statement which you yourself made in court in 1922 when you admitted the impossibility of dissociating yourself from the "diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura and the mad outrages of Bombay" and went on to say that you knew that you were playing with fire, but you had taken the risk and would do so again If you now contend that the consequences were unintended and unforeseen, this fact is itself an admission of your own inability to judge the reactions of your followers You now seek to excuse, if not defend, the barbarities committed in your own name and that of the Congress rather than to condemn them It is

clear where your sympathies lie. Your letter does not contain one word of explanation of your own message "Do or Die", nor does it throw any light on your message, quoted in Appendix X of the book which if you cannot disown it, is sufficient to refute your contention that no movement had been launched by you at the time when the disturbances took place

6 I am finally to refer to your request for the publication of your letter. In the first place, I am to remind you of your own position, which has already been explained to you, viz, that so long as the grounds for your detention remain unchanged Government are not prepared to afford you any facilities for communication with the general public, nor are they prepared themselves to act as agents for your propaganda. In the second place, I am to point out that you had ample opportunities during the months preceding the Congress resolution of the 8th August, 1942 to make your meaning unequivocally clear before you were arrested. The fact that your own followers interpreted your intentions in the same way as Government leaves no scope for further explanations. I am to inform you, therefore, that Government do not propose to publish your letters unless and until they think fit. This decision is, however, without prejudice to the freedom of Government to use at any time and in any manner which they think fit the various admissions contained in the communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them

7 To the extent that your present letter may be designed to relieve you of responsibility for the Congress rebellion and the connected events that have taken place, Government regret that they cannot accept it as in any way relieving you of that responsibility, or indeed, to their regret, as a serious attempt to justify yourself. They observe again with regret that you have taken no step in your letter to dissociate yourself personally from the Congress resolution of 8th August, 1942, to condemn unequivocally the violent outrages which took place in your name after the

passing of that resolution, to declare yourself unequivocally in favour of the use of all the resources of India for the prosecution of the war against the Axis Powers and in particular Japan until victory is won; or to give satisfactory assurances for good conduct in the future. And in the absence of any sign of any change of mind on your part and of any disclaimer of the policy as the result of which it has been necessary to restrain your movements and those of the Working Committee of the Congress, they are unable to take any further action on your present communication.

I am, etc,
R. TOTTENHAM.

GANDHIJI TO TOTTENHAM

To

The Additional Secretary, Home Department

October 26th, 1943.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 14th instant received on 18th instant

2 Your letter makes it clear that my reply to the charges brought against me in the Government publication "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43" has failed in its purpose, namely, to convince the Government of my innocence of those charges. Even my good faith is impugned.

3 I observe too that the Government did not desire "comments" upon the charges. Previous pronouncements of the Government on such matters had led me to think otherwise. Be that as it may, your current letter seems to invite an answer.

4 In my opinion, I have, in my letter of 15th July last, unequivocally answered all charges referred to in your letter under reply. I have no regret for what I have done or said in the course of the struggle for India's freedom.

5 As to the Congress resolution of 8th August 1942, apart from my belief that it is not only harmless but good all round, I have no legal power to alter it in any way. That can only be done by the body that passed that resolution, i.e., the All-India Congress Committee which is no doubt guided by its Working Committee. As the Government are aware, I offered to meet the members of the Working Committee in order to discuss the situation and to know their mind. But my offer was rejected. I have thought and still think that my talk with them might have some value from the Government standpoint. Hence I repeat my offer. But it may have no such value so long as the Government doubt my *bona fides*. As a "satyagrahi", however, in spite of the handicap, I must reiterate what I hold to be good and of immediate importance in terms of war effort. But if my offer has no chance of being accepted so long as I retain my present views, and if the Government think that it is only my evil influence that corrupts people, I submit that the members of the Working Committee and other detenus should be discharged. It is unthinkable that when India's millions are suffering from preventable starvation and thousands are dying of it, thousands of men and women should be kept in detention on mere suspicion, when their energy and the expense incurred in keeping them under duress could, at this critical time, be usefully employed in relieving distress. As I have said in my letter of 15th July last, Congressmen abundantly proved their administrative, creative and humanitarian worth at the time of the last terrible flood in Gujarat and equally terrible earthquake in Bihar. The huge place in which I am being detained with a large guard around me, I hold to be waste of public funds. I should be quite content to pass my days in any prison.

6 As to "satisfactory assurances" about my "good conduct" I can only say that I am unaware of any unworthy conduct at any time. I presume that the impression Government have of my conduct is referable

to the charges mentioned in the indictment, as I have succinctly called "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43" And since I have not only denied the charges *in toto* but on the contrary have ventured to bring counter-charges against the Government, I think that they should agree to refer both to an impartial tribunal. Seeing that a big political organisation and not a mere individual is involved in the charges, I hold that it should be a vital part of the war effort to have the issues decided by a tribunal, if mutual discussion and effort are considered by the Government to be undesirable and/or futile.

8 Whilst your letter rejects my request that my letter of 15th July last should, in fairness to me, be published, you inform me that their decision in this matter however, "is without prejudice to the freedom of Government to use at any time and in any manner which they think fit the various admissions contained in the communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them." I can only hope that this does not mean that, as in the case of the "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43", garbled extracts will be published. My request is that my letter should be published in full, if and when the Government think fit to make public use of it.

I am, etc,
M K GANDHI

TOILENHAM TO GANDHIJI

HOME DEPARTMENT,
November 18th, 1943

Sir,

In reply to your letter of October 26th I am directed to say that since there is no change in your attitude towards the Congress resolution of August 8th 1942, and Government have received no indication that the views of any of the Members of the Working Committee differ from your own, a meeting between you would appear to serve no useful purpose. Both you and they

are well aware of the conditions on which such a proposal could be entertained

I am to add that the other points in your letter have been noted

I am, etc,
R TOTIENHAM

October 18, 1943

Lord Wavell arrived in India. While in England he had said "The solution of the Indian political problem need not wait till the end of the war"

October 19, 1943

Lord Linlithgow left Delhi.

November 10, 1943

Lord Wavell presided over a meeting of his Executive Council.

December 20, 1943

Lord Wavell in his address to the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Calcutta, said

"The winning of the war, the organisation of the economic homefront and the preparations for peace call for the use of all the resources India has in determination, energy and intelligence. I welcome co-operation from any one and any body who can assist me in these great problems on which the future of India depends"

January 26, 1944

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu issued the following inspiring message on the Independence Day

"Not for us the easy ways of compromise or the shameful ways of surrender. For us there can be the open path of honourable peace, or, the steep and perilous path of sacrifice that ensures freedom"

LORD WAVELL'S ADDRESS TO THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

February 17, 1944.

Lord Wavell in his address to the Central Legislature referred to the request for the release of the Congress leaders as a 'barren one' until they showed readiness to recant the 8th August Resolution, reiterated that the Cripps' offer was open and made the following pronouncement regarding the immediate policy of the Government

"We are bound in justice to hand over India to Indian rule, which can maintain the peace and order and progress which we have endeavoured to establish. I believe that we should take some risk to further this. But until the two main parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress. For the present the Government of the country must continue to be a joint British and Indian affair."

February 22nd, 1944

After a protracted and severe illness Smt Kasturba Gandhi died in the Aga Khan Palace. A meeting which was to be held in Poona to mourn her death was banned by the Government

THE GANDHI-MURABEN LETTERS

To

The Additional Secretary, Home Department

February 26th, 1944.

Sir,

I have read the speech of the Hon'ble the Home Member in the Assembly on the debate arising out of the ban on Shrimati Sarojini Devi. The speech has reference among other things to the correspondence between Muraben and myself, and the Government's refusal to publish that correspondence. The following is the relevant portion of the speech:

"She (Shrimati Sarojini Devi) refers, and the point has been raised in this debate to a letter said to have been written by Miss Slade to Mr Gandhi and Mr. Gandhi's reply and I have been asked why no publicity was given to that letter. That letter was written and answered long before the Congress leaders were placed in detention. If Mr Gandhi had wished to give publicity to that letter he was perfectly free to do it himself. But it was a confidential communication addressed to him and I do not see any reason why Government should disclose a communication of that nature. I might say that it would not help the Congress case if it were disclosed.

"Then it has been said that Mrs Naidu wishes to defend the Congress from the implication of being pro-Japanese. Government have never at any time, either here or at home, charged the Congress with being pro-Japanese. Well, the allusion to that in the booklet called "Congress Responsibility" refers to a statement quoted from Pandit Nehru himself. I have not the time to quote it at length but if Hon'ble Members will refer to the quotation given in the 'Congress Responsibility' pamphlet they will easily find the passage in question."

Assuming that the report is correct, it makes strange reading.

Firstly, as to the non-publication by me of this correspondence between Miraben and myself, surely the publication was unnecessary until the charge of my being pro-Japanese was spread abroad.

Secondly, why do the Government feel squeamish about publishing "confidential" correspondence, when both the correspondents have specially invited publication?

Thirdly, I do not understand the reluctance of the Government to publish the correspondence when, according to the Hon'ble Home Member, the correspondence will not serve the Congress case.

Fourthly, the Government seem intentionally or unintentionally to have suppressed the very relevant

fact that Shrimati Mirabai wrote to Lord Linlithgow drawing attention to the libellous propaganda in the London Press at the time containing allegations that I was pro-Japanese, which allegations she invited him to repudiate. Her letter to Lord Linlithgow enclosed copies of the correspondence referred to, and asked for its publication. It was written on December 24th, long before the Government publication entitled "Congress Responsibility" which bears the date February 13th, 1943, appeared.

Fifthly, as to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's alleged statement before the Working Committee, I have already made it clear in my reply to the Government pamphlet that it was wholly wrong on their part to make use of the unauthorised notes of the discussions at the Allahabad meeting of the Working Committee, after Pandit Nehru's emphatic repudiation published in the daily press.

It is difficult for me to understand the Hon'ble Member's speech and the Government's persistence in making charges and innuendoes against Congress people whom they have put in custody and thus effectively prevented from answering those charges. I hope, therefore, that the Government will at the very least see their way to publish the correspondence referred to, namely, Shrimati Miraben's letter to Lord Linlithgow of the 24th December 1942, together with the enclosures.

I am, etc,
M K GANDHI

HOME DEPARTMENT,
March 11th, 1944

Sir,

In reply to your letter, dated February 26th, I am directed to say that Government do not think that any useful purpose would be served at present by publishing the correspondence in question. So far as Government are concerned, there is the statement in the Home Member's speech—"Government have never at

any time, either here or at home; charged the Congress with being pro-Japanese". They do not see how this can be regarded as "Government persistence in making charges and innuendoes against Congress people". So far as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is concerned, I am again to refer you to paragraph 2 of my letter of October 14th, 1943, in which it was made clear that he did not, in his public statement, repudiate the words in the "Congress Responsibility" pamphlet to which you took exception in paragraph 18 of your letter of July 15th 1942. There can, therefore, be no question of Government having made use of that passage after his repudiation of it.

I am, etc,
R TOLENNHAM

THE LORD WAVELL LETTERS

February 17th, 1944

Dear friend,

Although I have had not the pleasure of meeting you, I address you on purpose as "dear friend". I am looked upon by the representatives of the British Government as a great, if not the greatest, enemy of the British. Since I regard myself as a friend and servant of humanity including the British, in token of my goodwill I call you, the foremost representative of the British in India, my "friend".

2 I have received, in common with some others, a notice informing me, for the first time why I am detained, and conferring on me the right of representation against my detention. I have duly sent my reply, but I have as yet heard nothing from the Government. A reminder too has gone after a wait of thirteen days.

3 I have said some only have received notices, because, out of the six of us in this camp, only three have received them. I presume that all will receive them in due course. But my mind is filled with the suspicion that the notices have been sent as a matter of form only, and not with any intention to do justice.

I do not wish to burden this letter with argument I repeat, what I said in the correspondence with your predecessor, that the Congress and I are wholly innocent of the charges brought against us Nothing but an impartial tribunal to investigate the Government case, and the Congress case against the Government, will bring out the truth

4 The speeches recently made on behalf of the Government in the Assembly on the release motion, and on the gagging order on Shri Sarojini Devi, I consider to be playing with fire I distinguish between defeat of Japanese aims and Allied victory The latter must carry with it the deliverance of India from the foreign yoke The spirit of India demands complete freedom from all foreign dominance and would, therefore, resist Japanese yoke equally with British or any other The Congress represents that spirit in full measure It has grown to be an institution whose roots have gone deep down into the Indian soil I was, therefore, staggered to read that Government were satisfied with things as they were going Had they not got from the Indian people the men and money they wanted? Was not the Government machinery running smooth? This self-satisfaction bodes ill for Britain, India and the world, if it does not quickly give place to a searching of hearts in British high places

5 Promises for the future are valueless in the face of the world struggle in which the fortune of all nations and, therefore, of the whole of humanity is involved Present performance is the peremptory need of the moment if the war is to end in world peace and not be a preparation for another war bloodier than the present, if, indeed, there can be a bloodier Therefore, real war effort must mean satisfaction of India's demand "Quit India" only gives vivid expression to that demand, and has not the sinister and poisonous meaning attributed to it without warrant by the Government of India The expression is charged with the

friendliest feeling for Britain in terms of the whole of humanity

6. I have done. I thought, if I claim to be a friend of the British, as I do, nothing should deter me from sharing my deepest thoughts with you. It is no pleasure for me to be in this camp, where all my creature comforts are supplied without any effort on my part, when I know that millions outside are starving for want of food. But I should feel utterly helpless if I went out and missed *the* food by which alone living becomes worth while.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

February 25th, 1944

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of February 17th

You will by now have received the reply to your representation. I am sorry to hear that three of those in the Aga Khan's Palace with you have not received notices. This will be looked into at once.

I expect you have seen in the papers reports of the speech I made to the Legislature on the same day on which you wrote your letter. This states my point of view and I need not repeat what I said then. I enclose a copy for your convenience if you wish to read it.

I take this opportunity to express to you deep sympathy from my wife and myself at the death of Mrs Gandhi, we understand what this loss must mean to you after so many years of companionship.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL.

March 9th, 1944

Dear friend,

I must thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 17th February. At the outset I send you and Lady Wavell my thanks for your kind

condolences on the death of my wife. Though for her sake I have welcomed her death as bringing freedom from living agony, I feel the loss more than I had thought I should. We were a couple outside the ordinary. It was in 1906 that, after mutual consent, and after unconscious trials, we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was she became truly my 'better' half. She was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become, quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-co-operation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field, it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of "Satyagraha." When the course of Indian imprisonments commenced in South Africa, Smt. Kasturba was among the civil resisters. She went through greater physical trials than I. Although she had gone through several imprisonments, she did not take kindly to the present incarceration during which all creature comforts were at her disposal. My arrest simultaneously with that of many others, and her own immediately following, gave her a great shock and embittered her. She was wholly unprepared for my arrest. I had assured her that the Government trusted my non-violence, and would not arrest me unless I courted arrest myself. Indeed, the nervous shock was so great that after her arrest she developed violent diarrhoea and, but for the attention that Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who was arrested at the same time as the deceased, was able to give her, she might have died before joining me in this detention camp. My presence soothed her and the diarrhoea stopped without any further predicament. Not so the bitterness. It led to fretfulness ending in painfully slow dissolution of the body.

In the light of the foregoing you will perhaps understand the pain I felt when I read in the papers the statement made on behalf of the Government, which I hold was an unfortunate departure from truth, regarding her who was precious to me beyond measure I ask you please to send for and read the complaint in the matter which I have forwarded to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India (Home Department) Truth is said to be the first and the heaviest casualty in war How I wish in this war it could be otherwise in the case of the Allied Powers!

I now come to your address which you delivered before the Legislature and of which you kindly sent me a copy When the newspapers containing the address were received, I was by the bedside of the deceased Miraben read to me the Associated Press report But my mind was elsewhere Therefore, the receipt of your speech in a handy form was most welcome I have now read it with all the attention it deserves Having gone through it, I feel drawn to offer a few remarks, all the more so as you have observed that the views expressed by you "need not be regarded as final" May this letter lead to a reshaping of some of them!

In the middle of page two you speak of the welfare of the "Indian people" I have seen in some Viceregal pronouncements the inhabitants of India being referred to as the people of India Are the two expressions synonymous?

At page thirteen referring to the attainment of self-government by India you say, "I am absolutely convinced not only that the above represents the genuine desire of the British people, but that they wish to see an early realisation of it It is qualified only at present by an absolute determination to let nothing stand in the way of the earliest possible defeat of Germany and Japan, and by a resolve to see that in the solution of the constitutional problem full account is taken of the interests of those who have loyally supported us in this war and at all other times the

soldiers who have served the common cause, the people who have worked with us; the Rulers and populations of the States to whom we are pledged, the minorities who have trusted us to see that they get a fair deal but until the two main Indian parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress ' Without reasoning it out, I venture to give my paraphrase of your pronouncement "We, the British, shall stand by the Indian soldier whom we have brought into being and trained for consolidating our rule and position in India, and who, by experience, we have found can effectively help us in our wars against other nations We shall also stand by the Rulers of the Indian States, many of whom are our creation and all of whom owe their present position to us, even when these Rulers curb or actually crush the spirit of the people whom they rule Similarly shall we stand by the minorities whom too we have encouraged and used against the vast majority when the latter have at all attempted to resist our rule It makes no difference that they (the majority) seek to replace it by a rule of the will of the people of India taken as a whole And in no case will we transfer power unless Hindus and Muslims come to us with an agreement among themselves" The position taken up in the paragraph quoted and interpreted by me is no new thing I regard the situation thus envisaged as hopeless, and I claim in this to represent the thought of the man in the street Out of the contemplation of this hopelessness was born the anguished cry of "Quit India" What I see happening in this country day after day provides a complete vindication of the "Quit India" formula as defined by me in my considered writings

I note as I read your speech that you do not regard the sponsors of the formula of "Quit India" as outcasts to be shunned by society You believe them and trust their interpretation of their own formula to be high-minded persons Then, treat them as such and you cannot go wrong

After developing the Cripps offer you have said at page 16 in the middle of the paragraph, "the demand for release of those leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one until there is some sign on their part of willingness to co-operate. It needs no consultation with any one or anything but his own conscience for any one of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from the Quit India resolution and the policy which had such tragic consequences, and will co-operate in the great tasks ahead." Then again reverting to the same subject you say on pages nineteen and twenty, "There is an important element which stands aloof. I recognise how much ability and high-mindedness it contains, but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and unpractical. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and the future problems of India. If its leaders feel that they cannot consent to take part in the present Government of India, they may still be able to assist in considering future problems. But I see no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8th, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sack-cloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in the recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy."

I am surprised that you, an eminent soldier and man of affairs, should hold such an opinion. How can the withdrawal of a resolution arrived at jointly by hundreds of men and women after much debating and careful consideration, be a matter of individual conscience? A resolution jointly undertaken can be honourably, conscientiously and properly withdrawn only after joint discussion and deliberation. Individual conscience may come into play after this necessary step, not before. Is a prisoner ever free to exercise his conscience? Is it just and proper to expect him to do so?

Again, you recognise "much ability and high-mindedness" in those who represent the Congress

operation and then deplore their present policy and methods as "barren and unpractical." Does not the second statement cancel the first? Able and high-minded men may come to erroneous decisions, but I have not before heard such people's policy and methods being described as "barren and unpractical." Is it not up to you to discuss the 'pros' and 'cons' of their policy with them before pronouncing judgment, especially when they are also admittedly representatives of millions of their people? Does it become an all-powerful Government to be afraid of the consequences of releasing unarmed men and women with a backing only of men and women equally unarmed and even pledged to non-violence? Moreover, why should you hesitate to know their minds and reactions?

Then you have talked of the "tragic consequences" of the "Quit India" revolution. I have said enough in my reply to the Government pamphlet "Congress Responsibility, etc.", combating the charge that the Congress was responsible for those consequences. I commend the pamphlet and my reply to your attention, if you have not already seen them. Here I would just like to emphasize what I have already said. Had Government stayed action till they had studied my speeches and those of the members of the Working Committee history would have been written differently.

You have made much of the fact that your Executive Council is predominantly Indian. Surely, their being Indians no more makes them representatives of India than non-Indians. Conversely it is quite conceivable that a non-Indian may be a true representative of India, if he is elected by the vote of the Indian people. It would give no satisfaction even if the head of the Indian Government was a distinguished Indian 'not chosen by the free vote of the people.'

Even you, I am sorry, have fallen into the common error of describing the Indian forces as having been recruited by "voluntary enlistment." A person who takes to soldiering as a profession will enlist himself wherever he gets his market wage. Voluntary

enlistment has come to bear by association a meaning much higher than that which attaches to an enlistment like that of the Indian soldier. Were those who carried out the orders at the Jallianwalla massacre volunteers? The very Indian soldiers who have been taken out of India and are showing unexampled bravery will be ready to point their rifles unflinchingly at their own countrymen at the orders of the British Government, their employers. Will they deserve the honourable name of volunteers?

You are flying all over India. You have not hesitated to go among the skeletons of Bengal. May I suggest an interruption in your scheduled flights and a descent upon Ahmednagar and the Aga Khan's Palace in order to probe the hearts of your captives? We are all friends of the British, however much we may criticise the British Government and system in India. If you can but trust, you will find us to be the greatest helpers in the fight against Nazism, Fascism, Japanism and the like.

Now I revert to your letter of the 25th February. Mr. Bhabha and I have received replies to our representations. The remaining inmates have received their notices. The reply received by me I regard as a mockery, the one received by Mr. Bhabha is an insult. According to the report of the Home Member's answer to a question in the Central Assembly, the replies received by us seem to be no replies. He is reported to have said that the stage "for the review of the cases had not yet arrived. Government at present were only receiving representations from prisoners." If the representations in reply to the Government notices are to be considered merely by the executive that imprisoned them without trial, it will amount to a farce and an eye-wash, meant perhaps for foreign consumption, but not as an indication of a desire to do justice. My views are known to the Government. I may be considered an impossible man—though altogether wrongly, I would protest. But what about Mr. Bhabha? As you know, she is the daughter of an Admiral.

and former Commander-in-Chief of these waters. But she left the life of ease and chose instead to throw in her lot with me. Her parents, recognising her urge to come to me, gave her their full blessings. She spends her time in the services of the masses. She went to Orissa at my request to understand the plight of the people of that benighted land. That Government was hourly expecting Japanese invasion. Papers were to be removed or burnt, and withdrawal of the civil authority from the coast was being contemplated. Miraben made Chaudwar (Cuttack) airfield her headquarters, and the local military commander was glad of the help she could give him. Later she went to New Delhi and saw General Sir Alan Hartley and General Molesworth, who both appreciated her work and greeted her as one of their own class and caste. It, therefore, baffles me to understand her incarceration. The only reason for burying her alive, so far as I can see, is that she has committed the crime of associating herself with me. I suggest your immediately releasing her, or your seeing her and then deciding. I may add that she is not yet free from the pain for the alleviation of which the Government sent Captain Simcox at my request. It would be a tragedy if she became permanently disabled in detention. I have mentioned Miraben's case because it is typically unjust.

I apologise to you for a letter which has gone beyond the length I had prescribed for myself. It has also become very personal and very unconventional. That, however, is the way my loyalty to friends works. I have written without reservation. Your letter and your speech have given me the opening. For the sake of India, England and humanity I hope you will treat this as an honest and friendly, if candid, response to your speech.

Years ago while teaching the boys and girls of Tolstoy Farm in South Africa I happened to read to them Wordsworth's 'Character of the Happy Warrior.' It recurs to me as I am writing to you. It will delight my heart to realise that warrior in you. There will be

little difference between the manners and methods of the Axis Powers and the Allies if the war is to resolve itself into a mere trial of brute strength

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

March 28th, 1944

Dear Mr Gandhi,

I have your letter of March 9th. You will receive a separate reply from the Home Secretary on your complaint about Mr Butler's answer to a question in the House of Commons. I can only say that I deeply regret if you are left with the impression that the Government of India have been unsympathetic in the matter of Mrs Gandhi's illness. Miss Slade's case will be examined in the light of what you say about her.

I do not think it profitable that we should enter into lengthy argument, and do not propose to answer in detail the points you raise in your letter. But, I think it best to give you a clear statement of my views on the future development of India and the reasons for your present detention.

The draft declaration of His Majesty's Government which Sir Stafford Cripps brought to India stated in unmistakable terms the intention of His Majesty's Government to give India self-government under a constitution of her own devising, arrived at by agreement between the principal elements. I need hardly say that I am in entire accord with that aim, and only seek the best means to implement it without delivering India to confusion and turmoil. Much wisdom and a spirit of goodwill and compromise will be required to arrive at the right solution, but with good leadership I am sure a solution can be found.

Meanwhile there is much work to be done, particularly in the economic field, in preparing India to take her proper place in the change and progress in many hitherto unfamiliar directions and to raise the standard of living of her population. Such work is

primarily non-political, it may well hasten a political settlement, but cannot await it. It will give rise to many new and absorbing problems demanding the best abilities that India can bring to bear on them. India cannot be expected to tackle these problems in isolation from the rest of the world, or without the aid that Britain can give and the services of an experienced administration. But it is work in which leaders of all parties can co-operate with the certainty that they are helping the country towards the goal of freedom.

I regret that I must view the present policy of the Congress party as hindering and not forwarding Indian progress to self-government and development. During a war in which the success of the United Nations against the Axis powers is vital both to India and to the world, as you yourself have recognised, the Working Committee of the Congress declined to co-operate, ordered Congress ministries to resign, and decided to take no part in the administration of the country or in the war effort which India was making to assist the United Nations. At the greatest crisis of all for India, at a time when Japanese invasion was possible, the Congress party decided to pass a resolution calling on the British to leave India, which could not fail to have the most serious effect on our ability to defend the frontiers of India against the Japanese. I am quite clear that India's problems cannot be solved by an immediate and complete withdrawal of the British.

I do not accuse you or the Congress party of any wish deliberately to aid the Japanese. But you are much too intelligent a man, Mr Gandhi, not to have realised that the effect of your resolution must be to hamper the prosecution of the war, and it is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India, and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage. I do not see how those responsible for the safety of India could have acted otherwise than they did and could have failed to arrest those who sponsored

the resolution As to general Congress responsibility for the disturbances which followed, I was, as you know, Commander-in-Chief at the time, my vital lines of communication to the Burma frontier were cut by Congress supporters, in the name of Congress, often using the Congress flag I cannot, therefore, hold Congress guiltless of what occurred, and I cannot believe that you, with all your acumen and experience, can have been unaware of what was likely to follow from your policy I do not believe that the Congress party's action in this matter represented the real feeling of India, nor that the Congress attitude of non-co-operation represents the opinion of anything like a majority of India

To sum up, I believe that with general co-operation we can in the immediate future do much to solve India's economic problems, and can make steady and substantial progress towards Indian self-government

I believe that the greatest contribution that the Congress party can make towards India's welfare is to abandon the policy of non-co-operation and to join whole-heartedly with the other Indian parties and with the British in helping India forward in economic and political progress—not by any dramatic or spectacular stroke but by hard steady work towards the end ahead I think that the greatest service you can do to India would be to advise unequivocally such co-operation

In the meantime I regard it as my task in the interests of India of which I am a sincere friend, to concentrate all my efforts on bringing this war to a victorious conclusion, and to prepare for India's advancement after the war In this task I feel I can count on very considerable co-operation from the majority of Indians

Yours sincerely,
WAVELET.

April 9th, 1944

Dear friend,

I have your letter of 23rd March received by me on the 3rd instant. Please accept my thanks for it.

I take up the general matter first.

You have sent me a frank reply. I propose to reciprocate your courtesy by being perfectly frank. Friendship to be true demands frankness even though it may some time appear unpleasant. If anything I say offends you, please accept my apology in advance.

It is a pity that you have refused to deal with important points raised in my letter.

Your letter is a plea for co-operation by the Congress in the present administration and failing that in planning for the future. In my opinion, this requires equality between the parties and mutual trust. But equality is absent and Government distrust of the Congress can be seen at every turn. The result is that suspicion of Government is universal. Add to this the fact that Congressmen have no faith in the competence of the Government to ensure India's future good. This want of faith is based upon bitter experience of the past and present conduct of the British administration of India. Is it not high time that you co-operate with the people of India through their elected representatives instead of expecting co-operation from them?

All this was implied in the August resolution. The sanction behind the demand in the resolution was not violence, but self-suffering. Any one, be he Congressman or other, who acted against this rule of conduct had no authority to use the Congress name for his action. But I see that this resolution repels you as it did Lord Linlithgow. You know that I have joined issue on the point. I have seen nothing since to alter my view. You have been good enough to credit me with "intelligence," "experience" and "acumen." Let me say that all these three gifts have failed to make me realise that the effect of the Congress resolution "must be to hamper the prosecution of the war." The

responsibility for what followed the hasty arrest of Congressmen must rest solely on the Government For, they invited the crisis, not the authors of the resolution

You remind me that you were Comander-in-Chief at the time How much better it would have been for all concerned if confidence in the immeasurable strength of arms had ruled your action instead of fear of a rebellion? Had the Government stayed their hand at the time, surely all the bloodshed of those months would have been avoided And it is highly likely that the Japanese menace would have become a thing of the past Unfortunately it was not to be And so the menace is still with us, and what is more, the Government are pursuing a policy of suppression of liberty and truth I have studied the latest ordinance about the detenus, and I recall the Rowlatt Act of 1919 It was popularly called the Black Act As you know it gave rise to an unprecedented agitation That Act pales into insignificance before the series of ordinances that are being showered from the Viceregal throne Martial Law in effect governs not one Province as in 1919, but the whole of India Things are moving from bad to worse

You say, "It is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage" I must deny both the charges I venture to suggest that you should follow the golden rule, and withdraw your statement and suspend judgment till you have submitted the evidence in your possession to an impartial tribunal and obtained its verdict I confess that I do not make the request with much confidence For, in dealing with Congressmen and others Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and thus made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused Judgments of courts are being rendered nugatory by fresh ordinances No man's freedom can be said to be safe in this extraordinary

situation. You will probably retort that it is an exigency of the war. I wonder.

As I visualise India today, it is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. I agree with you that whilst you hold the views expressed in your letter under reply, the proper place for one like me is a Government prison. And unless there is a change of heart, view and policy on the part of the Government, I am quite content to remain your prisoner. Only, I hope you will listen to the request made by me through the proper channels to remove me and my fellow prisoners to some other prison where the cost of our detention need not be even one-tenth of what it is today.

As to my complaint about Mr Butler's statement and later the Home Secretary's I have received two letters from the Home Department in reply. I am sorry to say, they have appeared to me highly unsatisfactory. They ignore patent facts, and betray an obstinate refusal to face truth even on a wholly non-political issue. My correspondence with the Home Department continues. I invite your attention to it, if you can spare the time and are interested in the subject.

I am glad and thankful that Shri Munaben (Miss Slade's) case is being considered in the light of what I say about her in my letter.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

MAHATMA GANDHI RELEASED

May 6th, 1944

Mahatma Gandhi got an attack of malaria. Later he developed hookworm trouble as well as trouble in the kidneys. The Government's medical advisers were alarmed and advised that Mahatmaji should be released. Following that advice the Government released him unconditionally on May 6th, 1944, at 8 a.m. The Government, however,

made it clear that the release was entirely due to reasons of health and indicated no change in the attitude of the Government towards the Congress

While at Juhu Mahatmaji addressed the following letter to the Rt Hon'ble Dr M R Jayakar

May 20, 1944

Dear Dr Jayakar,

"The country expects much from me I am not at all happy I feel even ashamed I should not have fallen ill I tried not to, but failed at length I feel that they will imprison me as soon as I am declared free from the present weakness And if they do not arrest me, what can I do? I cannot withdraw the August resolution As you have very properly said, it is innocuous You may differ about the sanction It is the breath of life for me!"

Yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

Gandhiji addresses Representative Congressmen

POONA, June 30, 1944

"This accidental release does not restore to me the authority that lapsed with my imprisonment", declared Mr Gandhi addressing about 50 representative Congressmen of Maharashtra this evening The meeting was held in the hall of the Nature Cure Clinic of Dr Dinshaw Mehta

Mr Gandhi said

"I am glad that I am able to meet so many representatives of the Congress in Maharashtra I would like to make it clear that I do not meet you as a representative, in terms of the August resolution, to conduct the civil disobedience campaign adumbrated in that resolution. In the language of satyagraha I ceased to occupy that status as soon as I was imprisoned And if I am now out of it, it is not because of mine or your strength but as a result of illness Illness in a satyagrahi is a thing to be ashamed of This accidental release does not restore to me the authority that lapsed with my imprisonment I discussed my position with some lawyer friends in terms of the law prevalent in

this land, and they are of the opinion that what I hold to be true in the language of satyagraha happens to be true legally too

Probably we will be able to see their legal opinion published in a few days. Any, way, I am here holding no better status in the eye of the Congress than any single one of you. Indeed, speaking legally, I have no status in the Congress organisation, for I resigned some years ago even my four-anna membership. Nevertheless, I know that I occupy a big place in your hearts and you give weight to whatever I might have to say. What I may say is to be regarded merely as individual opinion to be accepted or rejected by you at will. It would have been otherwise if I were speaking in a representative character. Then I would have expected you as disciplined soldiers to carry out my instructions.

"At my request the Secretary kindly sent me a report of the happenings in Maharashtra since August 9, 1942. He has also kindly sent me a list of the names of those who have assembled here and some questions. I have read all these papers carefully. I don't propose to reply to the questions in detail. I had hoped to be able to be with you much longer than the period I have been allowed by my medical advisers. I have, therefore, to say what I have to say inside of 30 minutes. You will, therefore excuse me for confining my remarks only to the present. I can say at once that as a man wedded to truth and non-violence not merely as a matter of discipline or expedience but as a rule of conduct in all walks of life, I can endorse nothing untruthful or violent. But I refuse to sit in judgment upon the action of others. Nor is it of any avail at this moment and in this meeting to weigh individual or collective acts of Congressmen and others in the scales of non-violence and truth. Suffice it to say that experience has led me to the unshakable conviction that our success has been mathematically proportionate to the extent to which we have adhered to truth and non-violence. The phenomenal awakening of the masses during the last 25 years has been entirely due to the purity of our means. And to

the extent that untruth and violence have crept in, they have hindered our progress

"Your faith in me overwhelms me My accidental release has given rise to great expectations I am doubtful whether I deserve all this confidence But this much I know that whatever strength I may have, is entirely due to the fact that I am a votary of truth and non-violence Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs I do not agree I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation Their introduction and application in every day life has been my experiment all along

"What each one of us should do at the present moment is of the utmost importance As I have said even if I thought that there was an opportunity for offering civil resistance at the present moment, I cannot act in the name of the Congress But remember the concluding golden lines of the August resolution On the arrest of the principal Congressmen on the ninth day of August, 1942, every Congressman became his own leader competent to act as he liked provided that his action fell within the limits prescribed by truth and non-violence And, as I have said in my previous writings, every one who follows the Congress policy is a Congressman whether he is on the Congress register or not The Congress should be a poor organisation if it depended for its strength on a few lakhs of members whose names appeared on Congress rolls The great strength of the Congress is derived from the fact that it is broad based upon the goodwill of dumb millions and their co-operation at critical moments I, therefore, fail to see what cause there can be for frustration Is it merely because we did not reach our goal within the period hoped for? It is given to man to make the effort even in the face of the heaviest odds

Success depends upon God's will, or if you like, upon many circumstances outside our control There would be cause for frustration if we lost faith in ourselves, our means or our cause

There is no such thing as frustration in the dictionary of satyagraha I have no answer for those who never had

faith or who have lost faith in the efficacy of their own weapon. The communal tangle is no doubt there. But that is like a quarrel between brothers. We must admit that forces of evil hem us in from all sides. They were never so strongly entrenched as they appear to be at present. But that is no warrant for pessimism or despair. We have got the golden method of non-violent non-co-operation with evil. If we do not appear to have succeeded, the cause lies in ourselves. If several component parts of the nation do not believe in the virtue of non-co-operation, the responsibility of those who believe in it becomes all the more heavier. We may have to strive long. The burden to carry may be heavy. What burden can be too heavy for a man or woman who has risked all for the cause? I may tell you that at no moment have I suffered from any sense of frustration. Frustration is born of our own weaknesses and loss of faith. So long as we do not lose faith in ourselves, it is well with India. This is the message that I want to leave with you this evening.

"What about the communal tangle, the political deadlock, and the food situation and the like," you will ask. I have an answer for all these. But I may not attempt it at this meeting.

"I am convinced that the sufferings of the people cannot be alleviated until India has real political power. I cannot alleviate the food situation by feeding a few hungry mouths. I have friendly relations with capitalists, not for personal gain or in order to flatter them, but in order to get a portion of their wealth for the service of the poor. But their money cannot serve the hungry millions at present. What is the root cause of this all-India starvation? Under cover of war conditions starving millions are being further starved. Startling as the figures that come from Bengal, Karnatak and other parts are, the distress is much deeper. None, but a representative National Government can cope with it. I am of the opinion that if India had been free, there would have been no war with Japan. And if there was a war, we would have dealt with it much more effectively than at present. I do not want to change masters. I want to be free from all foreign control.

"You must have seen the correspondence recently published. We may not be deceived by the wealth to be seen in the cities of India. It does not come from England or America. It comes from the blood of the poorest. There are said to be 700,000 villages in India. Some of them have been simply wiped out. No one has any record of these thousands who have died of starvation and disease in Bengal, Karnatak and elsewhere. The Government registers can give us no idea of what the village folk are going through. But being a villager myself, I know the conditions in the villages. I know village economics. I tell you that the pressure from the top crushes those at the bottom. All that is necessary is to get off their backs. This is the meaning of non-co-operation with evil. Non-violence is a mighty weapon. In action it takes the form of civil disobedience and non-violent non-co-operation. Civil disobedience is a very potent weapon. But every one cannot wield it. For that one needs training and inner strength. It requires occasions for its use. But non-violent non-co-operation can be practised by everybody. I have been receiving letters of a most depressing, if also of a stimulating character. Those who understand the secret of non-co-operation will find a ready answer for all their difficulties. We must learn resolutely to say 'no' when it becomes a duty. The hunt for wealth or fame is not for the non-co-operator.

"Let us be patient and go through all the suffering that may be in store for us. We shall have met well this evening if I have succeeded in transmitting to you my faith in our cause and the means we employ for achieving it. Then there will be no room for gloom or despair."—"Associated Press"

MR. GANDHI'S LETTER TO VICEROY

Text of Correspondence

New Delhi, July, 1

As the substance of Mr. Gandhi's letter of June 17 to His Excellency the Viceroy and of the Viceroy's reply of June 22 has already appeared in the press, the full text

of the two letters is now released for publication, says a press note

MR GANDHI'S LETTER

Nature Cure Clinic, 6, Toddiwala Road,
POONA, June 17, 1944

Dear friend,

But for the fact that this letter is along the lines of your pre-occupation I should not have troubled you with any letter from me.

Though there is little cause for it the whole country and even many from outside expect me to make decisive contribution, to the general good I am sorry to say my convalescence threatens to be fairly long. Even if I was quite well, I could do little or nothing unless I know the mind of the Working Committee of the Congress. I pleaded as a prisoner for permission to see them. I plead now as a free man for such permission. If you will see me before deciding, I shall gladly go wherever you want me to, as soon as I am allowed by medical advisers to undertake long distance travelling.

I have circulated among friends, for private use, copies of the correspondence that passed between the authorities and me during detention. I do feel, however, that in fairness to me Government should permit its publication in the press.

My address will be as above till the 30th instant

I am,
Yours sincerely
M K GANDHI

VICEROY'S REPLY

The Viceroy's House,
NEW DELHI, June 22, 1944

Dear Mr Gandhi,

I have received your letter of June 17th. In consideration of the radical difference in our points of

view which appeared in our recent correspondence, I feel that a meeting between us at present could have no value and could only raise hopes which would be disappointed.

I am afraid that similar considerations apply to your request to see the Working Committee. You have recently made public your adherence to the "Quit India" resolution, which I am afraid I do not regard as a reasonable or practical policy for the immediate future.

If after your convalescence and on further reflection, you have a definite and constructive policy to propose for the furtherance of India's welfare, I shall be glad to consider.

Since you have circulated, without any reference to me, the correspondence which passed between us and it has in consequence appeared in the press, I have given instructions for the publication of the whole of the political letters which were written during your detention.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

GANDHI-GELDER INTERVIEW

PANCHGANI,
July 12, 1944

On July 11 the "Times of India", published what was said to be the interview given by Mahatmaji to Mr Stewart Gelder, special correspondent of the "News Chronicle" of London. When Gandhiji read it, he thought it necessary to publish the full facts and the correct text of the said interview.

(Through "Associated Press")

Handing over to press representatives two statements for publication today Mahatma Gandhi explained that they were two sets of notes prepared after discussion with an English journalist. One statement was intended for publication after the journalist had communicated his impressions of Gandhi to the Viceroy in Delhi and the

other statement contained notes of talks which the Mahatma had given the journalist to discuss with anyone who cared to understand Mr Gandhi and how his mind was working

The following is the write-up the publication of which Mr. Gandhi had agreed to under certain circumstances. This write-up was written following an interview between Mr Gandhi and a British journalist

I saw Mr Gandhi at Panchgani on July 4 I told him My editor is anxious to help in solving the political deadlock in India I went to Delhi and I was disappointed I hope you will not disappoint me, I asked, supposing you saw the Viceroy, what would you say to him?

He immediately replied "I would tell him that I sought the interview with a view to help and not to hinder the Allied war effort But I can do nothing without seeing the members of the Working Committee for I believe that my authority under the August Resolution ended with my imprisonment It was not revived by my release You are not interested in my personal views, but you should be if I spoke as a representative"

Hold on Masses

"I interrupted and said The Viceroy and everybody else is interested to know your mind because of your hold on the masses of India

"He replied 'I am a democrat and I cannot exploit that hold except to the organisation in the building of which I had a hand'

"But again I interrupted and said Before the Viceroy promises to see the Committee, he would want to know how you would influence the members

"He said 'History does not repeat itself The conditions of 1942 do not exist today The world has moved on during the last two years The whole situation has to be reviewed *de novo* The point, therefore, for me to discuss with the Working Committee is to know, how they react to the knowledge that I have gained since my release I have to take up the thread that was broken by Government in 1942 I was the first to negotiate and on failure to offer

civil resistance if I thought it necessary I want to plead to the Viceroy I can do so only when I know the Working Committee's mind But I tell you that the common talk among us is that whatever the Viceroy may wish personally, he has no authority in the political sphere Mr Churchill does not want any settlement He wants to crush me, if he has been correctly reported He has never denied the report The beauty of it for me, and the pity of it for him is that no one can crush a "satyagrahi" for he offers his body as a willing sacrifice and this makes the spirit free

Second Statement

"I saw Mahatma Gandhi on July 4 at Panchgani I told him "My editor is anxious to help in solving the political deadlock in India I went to Delhi and I was disappointed I hope you will not disappoint me I asked him Supposing you saw Lord Wavell how would you begin to talk? What would you say to him?"

"He promptly replied that he would tell the Viceroy that he had sought the interview with a view to help and not to hinder the Allies and it was to this end he had asked for permission to see the members of the Congress Working Committee He said he had no authority to act in the name of the Congress According to the canons of "satyagraha," when a civil resister was imprisoned, the authority vested in him automatically came to an end Hence the need for him to see the members of the Working Committee

"I said The Viceroy might feel as you swear by the August Resolution, and by the weapon of civil disobedience, your meeting the Working Committee members may only result in their reinvesting you with authority to carry on civil disobedience in the name of the Congress and the result will be that when you came out of the interview you will hold the pistol on the Viceroy's head and say 'Do this this or I start civil disobedience' That would make things worse than they are to-day

Friends of British

"Mr Gandhi replied 'At the back of that is total distrust of my profession that I am and have always been a

friend of the British Therefore, I can never use the weapon of civil disobedience during the war unless there was a very grave reason, as, for instance, the thwarting of India's natural rights to freedom'

"My next question was Supposing the Working Committee was let out of the jail tomorrow and Government refuse to give India what they want, would you start civil disobedience?

"Mr Gandhi replied 'If the Working Committee came out, they would take stock of the situation and discuss things among themselves and with me I can tell you this, that I have no intention of offering civil disobedience today I cannot take the country back to 1942, history can never be repeated Even without the authority of the Congress, if I wanted to do it, I could start civil disobedience today on the strength of my supposed influence with the masses But I would be doing so merely to embarrass the British Government This cannot be my object But the Working Committee would not sit still while people are suffering It is my conviction that we cannot meet fully the situation and alleviate the sufferings of the people unless power and responsibility are transferred from British into Indian hands Without such transfer the attempt of Congressmen and others to alleviate the people's sufferings are most likely to lead to conflict with Government"

"I interrupted and said When things are as they are, I cannot believe that they will transfer authority now, that is, Government will not concede the demand for independence while the war is on

Civil Administration

"Mr Gandhi replied that there was a difference between what he would ask today and what was asked in 1942 Today he would be satisfied with a National Government in full control of civil administration It was not so in 1942 Such a government would be composed of persons chosen by the elected members of the Central Assembly This would mean declaration of the independence of India, qualified as above during the war

"I thought it was a great improvement on the 1942 position I asked him if the military would control railways and the ports, etc Mr Gandhi replied that the National Government would let the military have all the facilities that the military might require But the control would be that of the National Government Ordinance rule would give place to normal administration by the National Government

"Will the Viceroy be there? I asked"

"Yes, but he will be like the King of England guided by responsible Ministers Popular Government will be automatically restored in all the provinces so that both the Provincial and Central Government will be responsible to the people of India So far as military operations are concerned, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief will have complete control But it must be possible for the National Government to offer advice and criticisms even in military matters Thus the portfolio of Defence would be in the hands of the National Government which would be genuinely interested in the defence of the country and may render great assistance in the shaping of politics The Allied forces would be allowed to carry on their operations on Indian soil I realise that they cannot defeat Japan without that"

Expenses of Allied Operation

"Mr Gandhi made it clear that the expenses of the Allied operation on the Indian soil should not be borne by India

"If the National Government is formed would you advise the Congress to participate in it, I asked

"Mr Gandhi replied in the affirmative

"So it means that if a National Government is formed the Congress will join and help the war effort What would be your position I asked, "I am a lover of peace through and through After independence was assured I would probably cease to function as adviser to the Congress and as an all-war resister I would have to stand aside but I shall not offer any resistance against the National Government or the Congress My co-operation will be absten-

tion from interfering with the even tenor of life in India I shall work with the hope that my influence will always be felt to keep India peace-minded and so affect the world policy towards real peace and brotherhood among all without the distinction of race and colour

"Supposing there is a conflict between the civil and military authorities, how would the dispute be settled? If, for example, civil authorities want to use the railway to carry 2,000 tons of food and the military authorities wanted it for carrying munitions, what would you advise, I next asked

"Mr Gandhi replied 'As I said before, I would not have to advise on such matters. But supposing I had, I can conceive the necessity of allowing precedence to the military. But supposing the military wanted to blow off places or practice manoeuvres in disregard of the life of the people I would say "hands off" The thing is that with mutual trust such difficulties would not arise and if they did they would be easily adjusted. If there is no trust I cannot work. I cannot work for Allied victory without trust. If they trusted, a settlement would be easy to achieve. Freedom for India will bring hope to Asiatics and other exploited nations. Today there is no hope for the Negroes but Indian freedom will fill them with hope"

'Finally, I asked. What about the Hindu-Muslim differences?

"Mr Gandhi replied 'If the British meant well there would be no difficulties' Mr Gandhi said in conclusion, "Most of us believe that whatever the Viceroy may wish personally, he has not the authority in the political sphere. Mr Churchill does not want a statement. He wants to crush me if he has been correctly reported. He has never denied the report. The beauty of it for me, and the pity of it for him, is that no one can crush a "satyagrahi" for he offers his body as a willing sacrifice and thus makes the spirit free' "

GANDHI-VICEROY CORRESPONDENCE**Proposal for Settlement of Deadlock**

Panchgani, July 15, 1944

Dear Friend,

You have no doubt seen the authentic copies now published in the Indian Press of the statements given by me to Mr Gelder of the "News Chronicle". As I have said to the Press, they were meant primarily to be shown to you. But Mr. Gelder, no doubt, with the best of motives gave the interview premature publicity. I am sorry. The publication will nevertheless be a blessing in disguise, if the interview enables you to grant at least one of my requests contained in my letter of June 17, 1944.

I am,
Yours, etc
M K GANDHI

Viceroy's Reply

New Delhi, July 22, 1944

Dear Mr Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of July 15. I have seen the statements you made to Mr Gelder, and your subsequent explanation of them. I do not think I can usefully comment at present except to repeat what I said in my last letter that if you will submit to me a definite and constructive policy, I shall be glad to consider it.

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

Gandhi's Proposals to Viceroy

Panchgani, July 27, 1944

Dear Friend,

I must admit my disappointment over your letter of the 22nd instant. But I am used to work in the face of disappointment. Here is my concrete proposal.

I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that in view of the changed conditions, mass civil disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian independence is made and a National Government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the pendency of the war, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But I am in your hands. I shall continue to knock so long as there is the least hope of an honourable settlement.

After the foregoing was written, I saw Lord Munster's speech in the House of Lords. The summary given by him in the House of Lords fairly represents my proposal. This summary may serve as a basis for mutual friendly discussion.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

Viceroy's Reply to Gandhiji

New Delhi, August 15, 1944

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of July 27. Your proposals are

1. That you should undertake to advise the Working Committee (a) "that in view of the changed conditions mass civil disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered" and (b) "that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, provided that His Majesty's Government (a) declare immediate Indian independence, and (b) form a "National Government" responsible to the Central Assembly, "subject to the proviso that, during the

pendency of the war, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India ”

2 His Majesty's Government remain most anxious that a settlement of the Indian problem should be reached But proposals such as those put forward by you are quite unacceptable to His Majesty's Government as a basis for discussion and you must realize this if you have read Mr Amery's statement in the House of Commons on July 28 last They are, indeed, very similar to the proposals made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps in April 1942, and His Majesty's Government's reasons for rejecting them are the same as they were then

3 Without recapitulating all these reasons in detail I should remind you that His Majesty's Government at that time made it clear

(a) That their offer of unqualified freedom after the cessation of hostilities was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed by the main elements of India's national life and the negotiation of the necessary treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government,

(b) that it is impossible during the period of hostilities to bring about any change in the constitution, by which means alone a "National Government" such as you suggest could be made responsible to the Central Assembly

The object of these conditions was to ensure the fulfilment of their duty to safeguard the interests of the radical and religious minorities and of the Depressed Classes, and their treaty obligations to the Indian States

4 It was upon the above conditions that His Majesty's Government invited Indian leaders to take part in an interim government which would operate under the existing constitution I must make it quite clear that until the war is over, responsibility for defence and military operations cannot be divided from the

other responsibilities of Government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government and the Governor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field. So far as the question of India's share of the cost of the war is concerned, this is essentially a matter for settlement between His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, and existing financial arrangements can only be reported at the instance of one or the other.

5 It is clear, in these circumstances, that no purpose would be served by discussion on the basis which you suggest. If, however, the leaders of the Hindus, the Muslims and important minorities were willing to co-operate in a transitional government established and working within the present constitution, I believe good progress might be made. For such a transitional government to succeed, there must, before it is formed, be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be framed. This agreement is a matter for Indians themselves. Until Indian leaders have come closer together than they are now, I doubt if I myself can do anything to help. Let me remind you too that minority problems are not easy. They are real and can be solved only by mutual compromise and tolerance.

6 The period after the termination of hostilities for which the transitional government would last would depend on the speed with which the new constitution could be framed. I see no reason why preliminary work on that constitution should not begin as soon as the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate to that end. If they can arrive at a genuine agreement as to the method of framing the constitution no unnecessary time need be spent after the war in reaching final conclusions and in agreeing on treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government. There

again, the primary responsibility rests on the Indian leaders

Yours sincerely,
WAVELL

Gandhi's plea to Britain

PANCHGANI, July 26

"However earnest I may be in my effort to reach a solution, I can do nothing if there is no response from the British Government," stated Mr Gandhi to the representative of "The Times of India," giving his opinion on the debate on the Indian question in the House of Lords

Mr Gandhi observed "I have read the debate with attention I confess that I am disappointed Lord Munster has correctly summarised my proposal, which is the most constructive suggestion that I could conceive of If it is not accepted even as a basis for a friendly discussion and for permission to be given to see the members of the Congress Working Committee, who alone can speak with authority, I must reluctantly come to the conclusion that the British Government do not want a fair solution of what I consider is a deadlock, but what they may not consider as such

"How I wish that the bogey of communal differences had not been raised in the debate! I have contended, as I contend even now, that differences there must be so long as there is a ruling third party to exploit them I have spoken what I feel to be the truth The occasion is too serious for me to hide it"

Communal issue

The impression formed by the "Orient Press" special representative in Panchgani is that Mr Gandhi has changed his mind a great deal on the Hindu-Muslim question, rather the Congress-League issue, and that the chances of a settlement are brighter today than ever A further move from Mr. Gandhi after he feels that he has in his possession sufficient evidence as warrants such a move, is expected in Panchgani

How to observe August 9

("Associated Press")

SEWAGRAM, August 5, 1944

In connection with the forthcoming August 9, Mahatma Gandhi has issued the following statement to the Press

"Many Congressmen ask me how to celebrate the forthcoming August 9. That date was a turning point in India's fight for freedom. I had intended to spend August 9, 1942, in peaceful introspection and to inaugurate negotiations for a settlement. But the Government or fate had decided otherwise. The Government went mad, and so did some people. Sabotage and the like were resorted to and many things were done in the Congress name or in my name. I am aware that I do not represent the Congress mind always. Many Congressmen repudiate my non-violence. The Working Committee is the only body which can legitimately and truly represent the Congress.

"As an old servant of the country, however, I can advise, and Congressmen are at liberty to treat my advice as instructions. I have already said that mass civil disobedience cannot be offered now, but mass civil disobedience is one thing and individual action in the sense of self-respect and liberty is wholly another. It is a universal duty for all time, the discharge of which requires no sanction save that of one's own conscience. In a previous note I have pointed out when and where the duty arises.

"But the forthcoming ninth is a special occasion. There has arisen much misunderstanding about the Congress purpose and mine. I must avoid all avoidable risks. Therefore, in all places except in Bombay my advice is not to disregard special police prohibitions for that day. For Bombay I have already given advice through the Mayor of Bombay, I need not reiterate the advice here. I have selected Bombay as the most suitable place for the simple reason that it is most easily accessible to me and is the place where the historic meeting of August, 1942, was held.

"Whatever it is to be, it will be a symbolic act. Curiosity is natural and pardonable, but I plead for restraint.

the self-imposed curb will be good for the country. My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family, that every man or woman, however, weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister. I have suggested the present symbolic procedure to see whether those who organise the demonstration have co-operation from the local public. The freedom of 400,000,000 people through purely non-violent effort is not to be gained without learning the virtue of iron-discipline—not imposed from without, but sprung naturally from within. Without the requisite discipline non-violence can only be a veneer.

“The second thing that I should like done on the forthcoming August 9, is for those who have gone underground to discover themselves. They can do so by informing the authorities of their movements and whereabouts or by simply and naturally doing their work in the open without any attempt to evade or elude the police. To go underground is to elude the police. Therefore, real discovery is to discover oneself to the party eluded. Nothing should be done unless the conviction has gone home that a particular action is essential for the cause. In the absence of such a conviction those who see this note may ignore it and should follow what they consider best for the country.

Fourteen-fold Programme

“What everyone should do on the ninth, whether they have the conviction as to non-violence or not, or, whether they are Congressmen or not, is to carry out on the ninth the whole or any part of the fourteenfold programme reiterated in my recent note. Just for example, everyone should spin.

Communities should find ways of giving expression to mutual understanding and brotherhood. Hindus and Muslims may organise joint programmes of prayers—God may bless the Quide Azam and me with wisdom to reach a common understanding in the interests of India. Hindus should visit Harijans and render them the service they

may need The spirit of service and helpfulness should pervade the atmosphere everywhere

"I have experienced friendliness from Englishmen and Americans wherever I have met them, whether officials or laymen I invite their co-operation especially on the ninth Let them realise that the August resolution was not conceived in hatred It was an unvarnished statement of the natural right of the people of this land

"To those who share my faith I would advise fasting and prayers on the auspicious day This must not be a mechanical act It must be done without ostentation for self-purification and penance Its uplifting power is capable of being tested by every individual for himself If the demonstration is carried out in the spirit in which I have conceived it, I have no doubt that it will lead to an early end of the misery of the masses"

August 9 in Bombay

August 9, 1944

While Gandhiji discouraged any revival of Civil Disobedience, he made an exception in the case of Bombay Twenty-five pledged satyagrahis wrote to the Police Commissioner that they would read the August 8, 1942, Resolution of the A -I C C at 5-30 a m near the Tilak Statue on Chowpatty and at the Napoo Garden All of them were arrested before 5-30 a m and after twelve hours' detention were released The observance on the part of satyagrahis as well as action on the part of the Government was symbolical

The following is the text of the letter addressed to the Commissioner of Police

BOMBAY, 3rd August 1944

To

The Commissioner of Police,

Bombay

Sir,

For many of us the 9th of August 1942 is a red-letter day Of the resolution of the 8th August we are proud It is a declaration of India's hope Though roughly national, it is international in outlook. True it

has sanction clause which too the Congress has nothing to be ashamed of. It replaces for its sanction aimed force by moral force of self-suffering in the shape of mass Civil Disobedience. If some Congressmen and others went astray during the days following the 8th August 1942, they did so contrary to the resolution. Mahatma Gandhi, the authority appointed by the A-I-C-C to enforce the sanction, never got the chance of enforcing it. He says that the authority lapsed with his imprisonment and was not revived by his release. He says further that, even if it has not lapsed, he thinks that under the altered circumstances it would be improper to revive the sanction clause. I confess that none of us has any knowledge of the technique of mass Civil Disobedience. Therefore, there is no question of enforcing the sanction. Hence any act that I and my fellow workers not exceeding twenty-five in the aggregate including me wish to do on 9th August next must not be confused with the sanction clause. This letter would be unnecessary but for the extraordinary powers given to you. Under ordinance rule no procession or public meeting can be held without your previous permission. This is an encroachment upon an ordinary civil right. Now on the 9th, as a symbol and token, I and my aforesaid fellow workers, twenty-five in all, propose to organise in all five parties of five persons, each with tri-colour flags. They will march in order to avoid crowds gathering, without notice, in two sections, one section marching towards the Chowpatty sands reaching the Lokmanya Statue and the other marching to Napoo Gardens, both at 5-30 a.m. and stand for five minutes in silent prayer, then recite the resolution in Hindustani and sing the Zenda Vandan song and disperse. I do sincerely hope that you have no objection to this simple ceremonial. I shall thank you to let me have your permission. I may mention that I am one of those that will march to Chowpatty sands.

Yours truly,
ABC

GANDHI-JINNAH TALKS

C. R Formula

Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve

- (1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period
- (2) After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the northwest and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State
- (3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held
- (4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, and commerce and communications and for other essential purposes
- (5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis
- (6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India

Lahore resolution of March 1940

"It is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. Adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other minorities, for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them. The session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of Constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

Congress Working Committee's Resolution on Non-accession of provinces

2-4-1942

"The acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of Indian States merging themselves in the Indian Union. The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break

in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate Nevertheless, the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on their substantial groups within that area "

GANDHIJI SUGGESTS AN INTERVIEW

Letter in Gujarati to Mr. Jinnah

DILKUSHA (Panchgani) July 17, 1944

Brother Jinnah,

There was a time when I was able to induce you to speak in the mother tongue Today I venture to write to you in the mother tongue I have already suggested a meeting between you and me in my invitation issued from jail I have not yet written to you since my release Today I am impelled to do so. Let us meet whenever you wish Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims I have always been a servant and friend to you and to mankind Do not disappoint me

Your brother,
M K GANDHI

Mr Jinnah's reply

H.B "Queen Elizabeth,"
SRINAGAR, (Kashmir), July 14, 1944

Dear Mr Gandhi,

I received your letter dated July 17th on July 22nd and I thank you for it

I shall be glad to receive you at my house in Bombay on my return, which will probably be about the middle of August. By that time, I hope that you will have recuperated your health fully and will be returning to Bombay. I would like to say nothing more till we meet.

I am very pleased to read in the Press that you are making very good progress, and I hope that you will soon be all right.

Yours sincerely,
M A JINNAH

Gandhi-Jinnah talks

Originally the date fixed for Gandhi-Jinnah talks was August 19, 1944. But Mr Jinnah fell ill and the date had to be changed. The talks opened on 9th September and concluded or rather adjourned 'sine die' on September 27, 1944. The talks were held at Mr Jinnah's Bungalow, Malabar Hill, Bombay.

Gandhi-Jinnah talks terminate

The following statement was handed to Pressmen by Mr Jinnah on the evening of September 27th.

Mr Gandhi from the very commencement of our talks made it clear that he had approached me in his individual capacity and that he represented no one but himself. However, he assured me that he was really open to conviction and conversion to the Muslim League Lahore resolution of March 1940.

Without prejudice to my objection that in order to reach any settlement, negotiations can only be carried on properly when the other side is also fully represented and vested with authority in deference to Mr Gandhi's wishes I agreed to the task of persuading and converting him to the fundamentals of the Lahore resolution.

I have placed before him everything and every aspect of the Muslim point of view in the course of our prolonged talks and correspondence, and we discussed all the pros and cons generally, and I regret to say that I have failed in my task of converting Mr Gandhi.

We have, therefore, decided to release to the Press the correspondence that has passed between us

Nevertheless, we hope that the public will not feel embittered, and we trust that this is not the final end of our effort

"ADJOURNED 'SINE DIE' "

Gandhiji addresses press

On September 28 Mahatma Gandhi held a Press conference attended by about 40 Indian and foreign journalists. He read the following statement

"It is a matter of deep regret that we two could not reach an agreement. But there is no cause for disappointment. The break down is only so called. It is an adjournment 'sine die'. Each one of us must now talk to the public and put our viewpoints before them. If we do so dispassionately and if the public co-operate, we may reach a solution of the seemingly insoluble at an early date. My experience of the precious three weeks confirms me in the view that the presence of the third power hinders the solution. A mind enslaved cannot act as if it was free. I need not impute base motives to the Rulers to prove what seems to me to be an axiomatic truth. Nevertheless, I am going to continue to work for the solution as I have been doing these three weeks. The questions for consideration are simple. Has the Rajaji formula or mine made a reasonable approach to the Lahore resolution? If they or either of them is such an approach all parties and especially the members of the Muslim League should ask the Qaid-e-Azam to revise his opinion. If Rajaji and I have stultified the Lahore resolution we should be educated. The chief thing is for the press and the public to avoid partisanship and bitterness."

"I shall act as my inner voice tells me," replied Mahatma Gandhi to a question on his future plans, whether he proposed to concentrate on a Hindú-Muslim settlement or take up political work, seeking imprisonment if necessary.

Asked how far the offer he had made had conceded the demand made in the Lahore resolution of the League,

Mahatma Gandhi emphasised that the Rajaji formula or the formula that he presented conceded the substance of the League demand

"In my opinion, either formula gives as much as can reasonably be expected with due regard to the interests of the whole of India," he said

In answer to a question whether his offer was to be treated now as withdrawn, he said that so far as he was concerned the offer he had made stood. It was not made in any bargaining spirit

"I think," he said, "it is a just solution of the problem and it is in the spirit of the policy which the Congress has consistently adopted in connection with the communal question, namely, self-determination."

A number of questions were put on the representative character of the two leaders who conducted the negotiations and why Mahatma Gandhi prolonged the talks when he was apprised of Mr Jinnah's views on the first day of the talks

Mahatma Gandhi answered "I am a man reputed to have inexhaustible patience and I had no reason to despair of either being converted by the Qaid-e-Azam or in my turn converting him. Therefore, so long as there was the slightest possibility, I clung to the hope that we shall pull through to a solution. Haste in such cases is a most dangerous thing. You should, therefore, conclude that yesterday was really the moment when the public should have been taken into confidence

"As for myself, I am entirely satisfied that we have not wasted these three weeks. I have no doubt whatsoever that we know now each other better than ever before"

"When you agreed to meet Mr Jinnah, did you meet him on the basis that he was the sole representative of the Muslims?" asked a reporter

Mahatma Gandhi replied "I have never admitted that claim, but I have said throughout that the Muslim League is by far the most representative Muslim organisation. It would have been folly on my part not to recognise this, but I have always been aware that there is outside the League a large body of Muslims which does not see eye

to eye with the League and which does not believe in the two nations theory "

Mahatma Gandhi asserted that the fight for the freedom had not been suspended when he approached the Qaid-e-Azam "My approach to the Qaid-e-Azam was itself a part of the fight for freedom," he said

Asked if there was any possibility of the two leaders meeting again in the near future, Mahatma Gandhi said "I hope so It is for the Press and the public to make it possible and hasten the date I assure you that we have not parted as enemies, but as friends "

If the Rajaji formula or his own formula has conceded the substance of the Lahore resolution, then why not agree to the resolution itself? was the next question

Mahatma Gandhi replied "Although the resolution does not say so, if you study the correspondence, it shows that it is based on the two nations theory and it has been known as the Pakistan resolution Further, I had to examine the resolution in view of the interpretation put upon it by the Qaid-e-Azam in his numerous speeches and statements in elucidation of the resolution It is indisputable that the resolution, while it does not enunciate that theory is based upon that theory The Qaid-e-Azam has insisted upon that Therefore, I urge that apart from the two nations theory, if I could accept the principle of division of India in accordance with the demand of the League, he should accept it But unfortunately it was just there we split "

Asked about Mr Jinnah's views regarding a provisional interim Government, he said "I am not sure that the Qaid-e-Azam puts great weight on the interim Government I gave all the explanations of my conceptions of an interim Government without any reservation It is quite clear in my letter If I did not go any further, it was because I could not and, even if you cross-examine me any further, I would have to say I could not go any further But if, as you suggest, the Qaid-e-Azam attached greater weight to it, then it was open to him to put it into concrete form I would have then-taxed myself and spared no effort

to accept the proposition or to make some other suggestions

Mahatma Gandhi was told that those Muslims who did not see eye to eye with the League had no real Muslim backing. He replied "Therefore, I have said that the League is by far the more representative of Muslim opinion, but I cannot despise the other by simply saying that they have no Muslim backing. What does it matter if they have no more Muslim backing if the opinion represented by a single Muslim, or by a body of Muslims whom you can count on your fingers, is intrinsically sound? The way of approaching a question is not to examine the numerical strength of those behind the opinion, but to examine the soundness of the opinion on merits, or else we will never reach a solution, and if we reach one, it will be a blind solution simply because it is the wish of the largest body. If the largest body goes wrong it is up to me to say you are wrong and not to submit.

"The rule of majority does not mean that it should suppress the opinion of even an individual, if it is sound. An individual's opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound on merits. That is my view of real democracy."

Mahatma Gandhi was asked what he thought of the idea of formation of provinces on linguistic, cultural and communal basis. He replied that since 1920 he was for provinces on a linguistic basis.

As for redistribution on a cultural basis, he did not really know what it meant and he was unable to understand how provinces could be reconstituted on communal lines unless there was a suggestion that there should be inter-migration of the various communities to concentrate in particular areas. It seemed to him to be fantastic and impossible. "We are not," he said, "inhabiting a country full of deserts and wastelands. We are a densely populated country and I do not see the slightest chance for such redistribution."

"In that respect the Lahore resolution is quite sound where there is an obvious Muslim majority they should be allowed to constitute a separate State by themselves

and that has been fully conceded in the Rajaji formula or my formula. There is not much distinction between them. That right is conceded without the slightest reservation. But if it means independent sovereignty so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it is an impossible proposition. That means war to the knife. It is not a proposition that resolves itself into a voluntary or friendly solution.

"Therefore, the Rajaji formula and my formula have presented certain things to be in common between sovereign States. Therefore, there is no question of one party overbearing the other or the Centre having an overbearing Hindu majority. I think our formula should be critically and sympathetically examined and it would be found that the formula concedes everything that could reasonably be conceded if we consider ourselves to be one family. Children of the same family, dissatisfied with one another by reason of change of religion, if they should separate, then the separation should be within ourselves and not separation in the face of the whole world. When two brothers separate they do not become enemies of one another in the eyes of the world. The world will still recognise them as brothers."

A journalist said that some of the Nationalist Muslims felt that the Congress through Mahatma Gandhi meeting Mr Jinnah had put them in a false position and that they might have to change their attitude towards Indian nationalism.

Mahatma Gandhi replied that it was an extraordinary suggestion. Nationalist Muslims were nationalists simply because they could not be otherwise. "I am a nationalist," he said, "not in order to please anybody, but because I cannot be otherwise. And if I approached the Qaid-e-Azam, I approached him in the common interests of myself and Nationalist Muslims and other Nationalists. Nationalist Muslims, so far as I know, were delighted when I approached the Qaid-e-Azam and were looking forward to a proper solution in the confidence that I would not sell the interests represented by them."

"Undoubtedly, a Nationalist Muslim represents the nation, but he represents the Muslims also, who are a part of the nation. He would be guilty of disloyalty, if he sacrifices the Muslim interests. But my nationalism has taught me that I would be guilty of disloyalty, if I sacrifice the interests of a single Indian."

Asked if there was any difference between his present attitude towards the Muslim League demand and the stand he took in 1942, Mahatma Gandhi said: "There is very great difference. In 1942, Rajaji had not 'burst' on the scene as he did at the Aga Khan Palace with a concrete proposition. It reflects very great credit on his persistence. He never takes up a standpoint without the fullest consideration and having taken it up, he follows it to the bitterest end. He had abundant faith in my loyalty and he never gave me up as I have never given him up. When he found me in the Aga Khan Palace and presented the formula, I did not take even five minutes and I said 'Yes' because I saw it in a concrete shape."

"My mind is narrow. I have not read much literature. I have not seen much of the world. I have concentrated upon certain things in life and beyond that I have no other interest. Therefore, I could not realise the meaning of Rajaji's stand and I disliked it. But when he came with a concrete formula. I myself a concrete being in flesh and blood—and when he had put something in concrete shape, I felt I could hug it and touch it. Therefore, you see the vast difference between 1942 and today. However, thereby I have not departed from the Congress standpoint in general terms. Congress has accepted self-determination and the Rajaji formula has also accepted the principle of self-determination and therefore the formula had become common ground."

Proceeding, Mahatma Gandhi explained that he accepted the principle of sovereign State, consistent with friendliness. "Friendliness suggests," he said, "that before the whole world we must act as one nation, not united by extraneous circumstances or united by force of British arms, but united by a greater force, that is, our own determined will."

INTERVIEW TO "NEWS CHRONICLE"

Gandhiji explains why the talks failed

The following is a record of an interview given by Gandhiji to Stuart Gelder of the "News Chronicle" on September 29, 1944, at Bombay

Mr Gandhi told me today why his talks with Mr Jinnah failed to produce a solution of the Hindu-Muslim differences "I could not accept the two nations basis This was Mr Jinnah's demand He wants immediate recognition of the North-West Frontier Province, Sind, the whole of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam as sovereign and completely independent Pakistan" He wants Mr Gandhi to agree to this amputation from the rest of India without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants by plebiscite He has rejected the Rajagopalachari formula I asked Mr Gandhi what he was prepared to recognise as Pakistan and on what basis there could be any hope of agreement in future He was frank and precise He replied, "I want to make it clear that I believe Mr Jinnah is sincere, but I think he is suffering from hallucination when he imagines that an unnatural division of India could bring either happiness or prosperity to the people concerned It was my suggestion that provided there was the safeguard of a plebiscite there could be sovereignty for the predominantly Muslim areas, but it should be accompanied by bonds of alliance between Hindustan and Pakistan There should be common policy and a working arrangement on foreign affairs, defence communications and similar matters This is manifestly vital to the welfare of both parts of India" This arrangement, Mr Gandhi said, could not interfere with the internal life of Muslims who would not be subject in any way to Hindu domination Such a division would not create an artificial split between people who whatever their religious faiths are descended from a common stock and are all Indians "Unfortunately," said Mr Gandhi, "Mr Jinnah would have none of it and asked me to agree to the principle of two nations entirely separate" I asked Mr Gandhi if he had adopted this attitude because he thought he could not

'sell' such a division to the country or because he thought it wrong in principle. He replied, "Because it is fundamentally wrong in principle. If I had thought Mr Jinnah's view was right even though the whole world were against me I would have accepted it personally and given him my unquestioned allegiance." I then asked Mr Gandhi, "If Mr Jinnah agreed to your view of division, but insisted there should be no plebiscite or a plebiscite in which only Muslim would vote, would you settle on this basis?" Mr Gandhi answered, "Never. How could I agree in a personal or any other capacity to decide the future of millions of people without them having anything to say about their destiny?" "What," I asked "was your impression of Mr Jinnah's attitude on the question of an interim National Government which you outlined to me in July?" Mr Gandhi replied "Mr Jinnah has said that he is deeply interested in Independence, but it did not seem to me that he set as great store by it as immediate recognition of the Pakistan he wants. Whereas, you see, my view has been all along that we cannot be free among ourselves until we are free from imperial domination. We have parted as friends. These days have not been wasted. I am convinced that Mr Jinnah is a good man. I hope we shall meet again. I am a man of prayer and I shall pray for understanding. In the meantime it is the duty of the public to digest the situation and bring the pressure of their opinion upon us."

MR. JINNAH'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Insistence on two nations theory

Mr M A Jinnah made the following statement at a Press conference held on October 4 at Bombay

My attention has been drawn to Mr Gandhi's Press statement which was published on September 29. It is a pity that he thinks that the presence of a third party hinders a solution, and it was very painful to me when he said, "A mind enslaved cannot act as if it was free." No power can enslave the mind and soul of man, and I am sure Mr Gandhi is the last person to allow his mind

to be enslaved I do hope that he will get over this depression from which he is perpetually suffering We have to reach an agreement of our own and find a solution in spite of that third party

As regards the other matters, Mr Gandhi has unfortunately initiated his propaganda in right royal style, contrary to our joint statement Apart from challenging the representative and authoritative status of the Muslim League, he is inciting Mussalmans against me, and he keeps on repeating the assertion throughout his statement that he has met the essence of the Lahore resolution by what he now calls his offer or offers in the shape of the Gandhi-Rajaji formula and his own proposal which he put forth at the eleventh hour Any intelligent man can now see that in substance there is no difference between the two What he calls his own offer came after he had rejected all the essentials of the Lahore resolution, and the Gandhi-Rajaji formula was shunted from the very commencement Now that the matter is subject to public discussion, and as Mr Gandhi is making statement after statement and giving interviews which are so misleading, I am compelled to deal with what he calls his offer Let us examine at least the main points

1 Immediate grant of Independence to India as one single national unit

2 Immediately setting up of a national provisional interim government of his conception, as defined by him in his letter of September 15, which is as follows "A provisional interim government which will be responsible to the elected members of the present Assembly or a newly elected one It will have all the powers less those of the Commander-in-Chief during the war, and full powers thereafter

It will be the authority to give effect to the agreement that may be arrived at between the Congress and the League' By the by, it does not only recognise the existence of a third party, but hands over to him all the powers of the Commander-in-Chief during the war and Defence, which is the most vital and overpowering Department

This clearly means the establishment immediately of a Central unitary or Federal government in charge of the entire civil administration with an overwhelming majority of Hindus in the Legislature, which will be not less than 75 per cent, to which the Cabinet will be responsible

3 That when such a government is established, it will be for this Government, so established, to frame the constitution of free India or it will set up an authority which will frame the constitution after the British power is withdrawn

4 That this National Government will draft the treaty and agreements as regards the administration of matters of common interest as now made clear in what he calls his offer, namely, in matters such as foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like which he maintains must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest under an efficient and satisfactory administration of a Central authority or government This can only mean that all these vital matters which constitute the lifeblood of a State will remain vested in the national federal government proposed by him, to which finally full powers and responsibility for the Government of India will be transferred It is therefore clear that the National Government will be brought into full being, established, and well in the saddle according to these terms, with an overwhelming and solid majority of Hindus, which virtually would be a Hindu 'raj'

5 Then we are asked to agree to the most tortuous terms and accept the principle upon which areas are to be demarcated, namely district-wise, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority, which according to Mr Gandhi means that only that district will be recognized in which the Muslims have a majority of something like 75 per cent, for he says that by absolute majority he means as in Sind, Baluchistan or the North-West Frontier Province, but according to Mr Rajagopalachari, absolute majority means as understood in legal parlance Apart from the fact that the joint authors already differ, I find from the dictionary that it means "a majority of all mem-

bers of a body (including those voting and those not voting) ”

6 That in areas thus demarcated, there will be promiscuous plebiscite on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise, and the form and the franchise will be decided again by the National Government referred to above, unless we can agree upon it beforehand

It is when we have agreed to all these terms then alone comes the question of separation of those mutilated, broken areas again subject to further conditions (1) This matter can only be considered after the termination of the war, and (2) after the transfer of full power and responsibility for the Government of India to this National Government, and it will be then that this National Government will set up a Commission for demarcating contiguous districts as stated above, and complete its work of sheer vandalism, especially in the Punjab, Bengal, and Assam and then its findings will be given effect to by this National Government and if these poor areas so paralyzed desire to sever or separate from the all-India united, federal government, fully and firmly established, then they must submit to and go through a promiscuous plebiscite, and if the verdict is in favour of the Muslims, even then all matters of vital importance, such as foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like shall remain vested in and continue to be administered by a Central authority or Government

This is what Mr Gandhi calls a partition or division between two brothers, and it is really amazing that he should repeat ‘ad nauseam’ that he has by his offer satisfied the essence or substance of the Lahore resolution. It would be difficult to conceive of a more disingenuous, tortuous and crooked assertion, which he keeps on repeating naively

What is the use of misleading people and making confusion worse confounded if we accept these terms, which present us with a veritable trap and a slough of death? It means the burial of Pakistan But I see some ray of hope still when he says, “If Rajaji and I have stultified the Lahore resolution, we should be educated”

I tried to do so, as far as Mr Gandhi was concerned, for three weeks, but his ailment is so long-standing and so chronic that it is beyond the reach of a physician.

I hope that his appeal to the Press and the public to educate him will not fall on deaf ears. But when he was asked, what next, he was pleased to say "I shall act as the inner voice tells." For an ordinary mortal like me there is no room in the presence of his "inner voice."

Mr Gandhi may sincerely believe that he has complied with the essentials of the Lahore resolution by his own offer or by the Gandhi-Rajaji formula, but it is pure imagination and delusion. The language and the terms of both, as clarified by Mr Gandhi, show that they are like the Siamese Twins, and it is impossible to maintain that either of them satisfies any of the essentials embodied in the Lahore resolution.

His contradictions and inconsistencies even in a single letter, however short, are beyond measure, and the sum total of all that has happened during the past four weeks, presents one with a Chinese puzzle. I will give one instance, amongst many.

"Where there is an obvious Muslim majority, they should have the fullest right to constitute themselves into a separate State. But if it means utterly independent sovereignty so that there is nothing in common between the two, I hold that it is an impossible proposition. Then it means a fight to the knife."

Here is an apostle and a devotee of non-violence threatening us with a fight to the knife, and according to him the talks have only adjourned 'sine die'. But apart from that, what kind of separate State does he then concede to the obvious Muslim majority in their national homelands?

Mr Gandhi, perhaps under provocation, again asserted that he had never admitted the claim of the Muslim League as the only authoritative organization of the Mussalmans, and darkly hinted that there are other Muslim organizations with a large body of Muslim opinion behind them who do not see eye to eye with the League and do not support the two-nations theory. Thereby he has again made an

attempt to discredit the Muslim League and disrupt the Mussalmans, for he knows that is not true. Of course, no nation can attain absolute and complete unanimity cent per cent.

In one breath Mr Gandhi agrees to the principle of division, and in the next he makes proposals which go to destroy the very foundations on which the division is claimed by Muslim India. On the one hand he wants a League-Congress agreement, and on the other he denies its representative character and authority to speak on behalf of the Mussalmans of India. Mr Gandhi is an enigma.

Mr Jinnah then elucidated a number of questions put by Pressmen regarding the boundary of the Pakistan State. He was asked if any machinery will be set up to decide the case of predominantly non-Muslim border areas, as to whether they intended to join Pakistan or Hindustan. Mr. Jinnah referred the questioner to the Lahore resolution which stated that the division should be on the basis of the present boundaries of the six provinces, namely the N W F P the Punjab, Sind, Bengal, Assam and Baluchistan subject to territorial adjustments that might be necessary.

He emphasised the words "subject to" and explained that territorial adjustments did not apply to one side only but to both sides, Hindustan and Pakistan.

"I made it clear," Mr Jinnah said, "that if we agree on the fundamentals of the Lahore resolution then the question of demarcating or defining the boundaries can be taken up later in the same way as a question of boundaries arising between two nations," and solved. It will be like one Government negotiating with another to arrive at a settlement.

"But there are no Governments here," interrupted a reporter. Mr Jinnah said that the two bodies would set up constitution-making bodies which would deal with the matter or even before that they might arrive at an agreement.

"Is there any possibility of your meeting Mahatma Gandhi in the near future", he was asked. Mr Jinnah said "Mr Gandhi says that it depends on his inner voice. I have no admission to that place. I cannot say."

Mr Jinnah was asked whether he had any scheme for the constitution of Pakistan Mr Jinnah said that the principle of Pakistan should be first accepted and the scheme would be formulated thereafter

Further explaining the point Mr Jinnah referred to a previous question, namely, the absence of two contracting Governments on behalf of Hindustan and Pakistan and said that it was true there were no 'de jure' Governments If the principle of division was accepted then it followed that both Hindustan and Pakistan would have to choose their own constitution-making bodies Those bodies as representing two sovereign States would deal with questions of mutual and natural relations, and obligations by virtue of the physical contiguity of the States and they would then as two independent sovereign States two nations—come to an agreement on various matters "Take the case of America," he said "There are 23 independent sovereign States in America They have their treaties and agreements with regard to their mutual interest Even so the States in Europe have their own agreements with each other for inter-trade and commerce and even alliances These are things that can be adjusted Agreements and treaties are entered into even between two countries that have no physical contiguity Here the two nations are neighbours and have physical contiguity "

Earlier Mr Jinnah said that one important issue that he had dealt with in his statement was whether the offer or offers of Mr Gandhi had either of them satisfied the essence or substance of the Lahore resolution He had explained the position fully "Mr Gandhi says", Mr Jinnah added, "that if his formula or Rajaji's formula had stultified the Lahore resolution then they should be educated To that my answer is I have made my contribution for 21 days and am still making that contribution and so far as the public is concerned, I hope it will not fall on deaf ears Mr Gandhi in his statements and interviews has attempted to discredit the League and cause disruption among Muslims I naturally resent it and he will get his answer "

BOMBAY CONFERENCE

28th and 29th October, 1941

The Congressmen of Bombay convened an informal conference of representative Congressmen of the four Congress Provinces, viz, Gujarat, Bombay City, Maharashtra and Karnataka. The Conference was held on 28th and 29th October. Only five days earlier Gandhiji had announced "Yet another fast is in store for me." Gandhiji took this Conference seriously and not only blessed it but also sent important hints to workers regarding the Constructive Programme. The Conference passed 15 Resolutions, the most important of which are published here. In response to the importunate appeals made by many prominent leaders, Mahatma adjourned the fast 'sine die'.

Constructive Programme

- 1 Communal Unity
- 2 Removal of Untouchability
- 3 Prohibition
- 4 Khadi
- 5 Other Village Industries
- 6 Village Sanitation
- 7 New or Basic Education
- 8 Adult Education
- 9 Uplift of Women
- 10 Service of the so-called Aborigines
- 11 Education in Health, and Hygiene
- 12 Propaganda of Rashtra Bhasha
- 13 Love of one's own Language
- 14 Working for Economic Equality
15. Organisation of Labour, Kisans and Students

THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

Mahatma's Hints to Workers

Workers should definitely realise that the constructive programme is the non-violent and truthful way of winning Poorna Swaraj. Its wholesale fulfilment is complete Independence. Imagine all the forty crores of people engaged

in the whole of the constructive programme which is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward. Can anybody dispute the proposition that it must mean complete independence in every sense of the expression, including the ousting of foreign domination? When the critics laugh at the proposition, what they mean is that forty crores of people will never co-operate in the effort to fulfil the programme. No doubt there is considerable truth in the scoff. My answer is, it is worth the attempt. Given an indomitable will on the part of a band of earnest workers, the programme is as workable as any other and more so than most. Anyway, I have no substitute for it, if it is to be based on non-violence.

Civil Disobedience, mass or individual, is an aid to constructive effort and is a full substitute for armed revolt. Just as military training is necessary for armed revolt, training in constructive effort is equally necessary for civil resistance. And just as the use of arms becomes necessary only when occasion demands it, even so is the use of civil resistance only occasional.

Therefore workers will never be on the look out for civil resistance. They will hold themselves in readiness, if the constructive effort is sought to be defeated. To take one or two illustrations, effort for communal friendship cannot be defeated, political pacts can. But political pacts are required because of the previous lack of friendship. Again Khadi manufacture and its use cannot be defeated if both become fairly universal. The manufacture and use are not to be brought about by being imposed upon the people, but they have to be intelligently accepted by them as one of the necessary items of the freedom movement, when it is worked from the villages as units. Pioneers even in such programmes can be obstructed. They have had to go through the fire of suffering throughout the world. There is no Swaraj without suffering. In violence truth is the greatest sufferer, in non-violence truth is ever triumphant.

If this preliminary observation has gone home to the reader he will find the constructive programme to be full of deep interest. It should prove as absorbing as politics so called and platform oratory.

The detailed constructive programme is to be found in my pamphlet on it, and Dr Rajendra Prasad's which is a running commentary on it. It should be remembered that it is illustrative, not exhaustive. Local circumstances may suggest many more items not touched in the printed programme. These are beyond the scope of a treatise on an All-India programme. They are necessarily for local workers to find out and do the needful.

In these hints I have singled out some items for fuller emphasis in the light of experience gained since the publication of the programme.

Kisans

The Kisan or the peasant, whether as a landless labourer or a labouring proprietor, comes first. He is the salt of the earth which rightly belongs or should belong to him, not to the absentee landlord or zamindar. But in the non-violent way the labourer cannot forcibly eject the absentee landlord. He has so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him. Closest co-operation amongst the peasants is absolutely necessary. To this end special organising bodies or committees should be formed where there are none and those already in existence should be reformed where necessary. The Kisans are for the most part illiterate. Both adults and young persons of school-going age should be educated. This applies to men and women. Where they are landless labourers their wages should be brought to a level that would ensure a decent living which should mean balanced food, dwelling houses and clothing, which should satisfy health requirements. Land laws should be investigated. The peasant indebtedness offers a limitless field for research. The problem of cattle too is an integral part of agriculture in India and therefore requires the attention of workers skilled in this very intricate and somewhat baffling problem.

Labour

Closely allied to the kisan work is labour. Here labour means industrial labour and therefore concentrated and centralised and much more limited in scope. Moreover, it

lends itself readily to political handling. Being necessarily confined to cities it attracts workers more easily than kisan work. As part of constructive programme its primary aim is elevation of labour to its deserved status. Therefore a labour worker's aim should be to raise the moral and intellectual height of labour and thus by sheer merit to make him or her capable not merely of bettering his or her material condition but making labour master of the means of production instead of being the slave that it is. Capital should be labour's servant, not its master. Labour should be made conscious of its duty from whose performance rights follow as a matter of course. In a concrete form

- (a) Labour should have its own unions,
- (b) Education both general and scientific, of both men and women, should be regularly undertaken through night schools,
- (c) Children of labourers should be educated after the basic education style,
- (d) There should be a hospital, a creche and a maternity home attached to every centre,
- (e) Labour should be able to support itself during strikes (Labour should be taught the science of conducting a successful non-violent strike)

All the work I have mentioned could be only done through unions mentioned in (a). To my knowledge the Ahmedabad Union is the best managed union. This does not mean that it has reached my ideal. It is trying to. If all the unions worked in the same direction, the lot of labour would be infinitely better than it is today. Labour united and morally and intellectually trained would any day be superior to capital.

Students

Next in importance is the student class above the age of 12. Indeed if we had enough workers of the right type, I would go so far as to say that we should work among them as soon as they begin learning as infants. For they have to be taken in hand from the school-going age. I need not say that I have not in mind their political use.

For the present the schools are largely under Government control or are influenced by them. Hence the student's education is defective in a vital matter. They are untouched by the political condition of the country save what they learn from the newspapers or platform orators. They should have, in a systematic manner, their present education supplemented by Congress workers. How this can be fitted into the present system of education is a serious question. But it has to be tackled. Up to the Matriculation standard co-operation of parents is necessary. I adhere to the view often expressed by me that the student world should be aloof from the political turmoil. It would be different if there was a mass civil disobedience. But that is out of the question for the time being at any rate. But they should have education in national consciousness. It is the duty of an independent state to teach its citizens to be patriotic. The education imparted is by a foreign agency. It runs contrary to the national aspirations. There should therefore be a body of workers whose duty it would be to undertake the big task of taking in hand the work mentioned above. In this sense it is a new field and it is of vital importance to us. We must recognise the fact that the students are not to be weaned from schools and colleges. The rapidly increasing number of entrants is proof positive of it. The best course therefore is to supplement their studies in an orderly manner. Deliverance lies through national effort in this direction showing marked superiority over the foreign method.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Nation Congratulated

This Conference congratulates the Indian people and particularly the people of the Province of Bombay for bravely meeting the challenge of the Government and courageously facing the repression and terrorism that followed the arrest and detention without trial of the national leadership of this country on August 9, 1942.

2. Faith in Gandhiji's Leadership

After having carefully considered the political situation in the country since the passing of what is popularly known as the 'Quit India' resolution on August 8, 1942, this Conference reaffirms its unswerving and ever increasing confidence in the political leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Conference is grateful to Gandhiji for the unremitting efforts he has been making ever since his release in May last for the national independence despite his delicate health and with the handicap of the absence of his colleagues of the Congress Working Committee. The Conference endorses Gandhiji's latest hints for workers on the constructive programme and calls upon all Congressmen to carry out as many of the fourteen items of that programme as possible. Congressmen must cultivate a living faith in this constructive programme so as to make it a powerful instrument of our national solidarity under the unique leadership of Mahatmaji.

3. Reorganisation of Congress

This Conference is of opinion that the Indian National Congress requires to be reorganised for speedier attainment of the goal of independence on a sounder, more scientific and broader basis and that for such reorganisation it is necessary that more continuous and living contact must be established between Congress Committees and the numerous organisational units that have been and are working in the country, and in fields where organisational units are not in existence the Congress Committees must set up organisations on Congress lines for the purpose of canalising all latent forces. For the purposes of such reorganisation the Congress Committees and Congress workers must establish immediate and strong links with

- (a) the students' organisations and the student movement,
- (b) the trade unions as well as unorganised industrial workers,
- (c) the organisations of 'gumastas' or shop-assistants as well as unorganised shop-assistants,

- (d) the peasants and landless labour,
- (e) the women's organisations,
- (f) the teachers who are in charge of the education of our children,
- (g) various professions, organised or otherwise, and
- (h) the commercial and business interests

The Conference is of opinion that to be able to carry out these responsibilities there must be educative propaganda among the people and the Congress Committees must organise centres for training workers for various activities

4. Resolution of August 8, 1942

In the opinion of this Conference the AICC Resolution of the August 8, 1942, still remains in force and governs the Congress policy as interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi

5. Discipline

Whereas the Congress is an active political organisation fighting a powerful foreign government, it is necessary that no component element of the Congress and no members holding any elective posts on any constituted Congress body should be allowed to work, or carry on propaganda in the country, against the deliberate decisions of the duly constituted Congress authorities. This Conference notes with regret that several members of the Royist and Communist Parties holding elective posts in Congress Committees have acted and carried on propaganda against the AICC Resolution of August 8, 1942, and is of opinion that disciplinary action ought to be taken against them. This Conference is further of opinion that Congressmen ought to desist from any political association with the above-mentioned parties

6 Constructive Programme

This Conference is of opinion that while Congress organisations and Congressmen have given their approval to the constructive programme, they have not been able to realise the dynamic force underlying the same and have

not worked for its fulfilment as vigorously and intensively as they ought to. The Conference strongly urges the people of this province in general and the Congress Organisations in particular to realise this dynamic force and to concentrate their efforts on successfully carrying out the constructive programme with special emphasis on—

- (i) Khadi,
- (ii) Gramodyoga,
- (iii) Basic Education, and
- (iv) Popularisation of Hindustani

which form the foundation of that programme

7. Corruption and Exploitation

This Conference draws the attention of the people of Bombay Province to the corruption and exploitation which are rampant in the country and are choking the life of the people and on which Mahatma Gandhi has focussed public attention. The Conference makes a fervent appeal to the people of this Province to make serious efforts to mobilise public opinion against the same and further to take all possible steps to eradicate these evils.

WAVELL PLAYS PHYSICIAN

Calcutta, December 14, 1944

Lord Wavell delivered the Annual address to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta on December 14, and on the very same day Mr Amery made a statement in the House of Commons. Lord Wavell said

"I do not believe that your condition calls for a serious operation. I do not think that the 'Quit India' mixture or these Satyagraha pills have done you much good. I should suggest your leaving off medicines altogether. The first requirement for a return to India's political health is a faith cure, a belief in the good intentions of the British people and in their genuine desire for a settlement and for the welfare and self-Government of the Indian people. The previous rejections of their offers must further advance until they feel that the spirit of compro-

mise and co-operation is real"

Replying to Mr. Ivor Thomas M P, Mr Amery said in the House of Commons:

"As regards the release of Congress Party Leaders I have nothing to add to the reply I made on October 5, to Mr Sorensen"

The reply that Mr Amery made on October 5 was that he was not aware of any reason for relaxing the orders of detention of Congress Leaders who made no response to the Viceroy's invitation to abandon the policy of non-co-operation and obstruction

WAVELL'S TRIP TO LONDON

March-June, 1945

On March 21, Lord Wavell flew to England to hold consultations with His Majesty's Government After ten weeks of consultation with the Coalition Government as it then was, Lord Wavell returned to India on Monday, June 4 1945 While he was in England the Germans surrendered and the European War terminated The Indian question had to be attended to particularly because General Elections in the United Kingdom were to be held after the termination of hostilities in Europe An agreed decision was taken by the Cabinet in London and Lord Wavell came to India with that decision in his bag

Lord Wavell's Broadcast

June 14, 1945

His Excellency the Viceroy broadcast the following proposals

"I have been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government These proposals are at the present moment being explained to Parliament by the Secretary of State for India My intention in this broadcast is to explain to you the proposals, the ideas

underlying them, and the method by which I hope to put them into effect

"This is not an attempt to obtain or impose a constitutional settlement His Majesty's Government had hoped that the leaders of the Indian parties would agree amongst themselves on a settlement of the communal issue, which is the main stumbling block, but this hope has not been fulfilled

'In the meantime, India has great opportunities to be taken and great problems to be solved which require a common effort by the leading men of all parties I therefore propose, with the full support of His Majesty's Government to invite Indian leaders, both of Central and Provincial politics, to take counsel with me with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council more representative of organised political opinion The proposed new Council would represent the main communities and would include equal proportions of Caste Hindus and Moslems

"It would work, if formed, under the existing constitution But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Member It is also proposed that the portfolio of External Affairs, which has hitherto been held by the Viceroy, should be placed in charge of an Indian Member of Council, so far as the interests of British India are concerned.

"A further step proposed by His Majesty's Government is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, to represent Great Britain's Commercial and other such interests in India

"Such a new Executive Council will, you realise, represent a definite advance on the road to Self-Government It will be almost entirely Indian, and the Finance and Home Members will for the first time be Indians, while an Indian will also be charged with the management of India's foreign affairs Moreover, members will now be selected by the Governor-General after consultation with political leaders, though their appointment will of course be subject to the approval of His Majesty the King Emperor

"The Council will work within the framework of the present constitution, and there can be no question of the Governor-General agreeing not to exercise his constitutional power of control, but it will of course not be exercised unreasonably

"I should make it clear that the formation of this Interim Government will in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement

"The main tasks for this new Executive Council would be —

"First, to prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated

"Secondly, to carry on the Government of British India with all the manifold tasks of post-war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and come into force

"Thirdly, to consider, when the members of Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved. The third task is most important. I want to make it quite clear that neither I nor His Majesty's Government have lost sight of the need for a long-term solution, and that the present proposals are intended to make a long-term solution easier

"I have considered the best means of forming such a Council and have decided to invite the following to Vice-regal Lodge to advise me

"Those now holding office as Premier in a Provincial Government, or, for Provinces now under Section 93 Government, those who last held the office of Premier

"The leader of the Congress Party and the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League in the Central Assembly, the leaders of the Congress Party and the Muslim League in the Council of State, also the leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Assembly

'Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah as the recognised leaders of the two main political parties

"Rao Bahadur N Siva Raj to represent the Scheduled Classes

"Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs

"Invitations to these gentlemen are being handed to them today and it is proposed to assemble the Conference on 25th June at Simla, where we shall be cooler than at Delhi

"I trust that all those invited will attend the Conference and give me their help. On me and on them will lie a heavy responsibility in this fresh attempt to make progress towards a final settlement of India's future

"If the meeting is successful, I hope that we shall be able to agree on the formation of the new Executive Council at the centre, I also hope that it will be possible for Ministries to reassume office and again undertake the tasks of Government in the provinces now administered under Section 93 of the Constitution Act and that these Ministries will be coalitions

"If the meeting should unfortunately fail, we must carry on as at present until the parties are ready to come together. The existing Executive Council, which has done such valuable work for India, will continue if other arrangements cannot be agreed

'But I have every hope that the meeting will succeed, if the party leaders will approach the problem, with the sincere intention of working with me and with each other. I can assure them that there is behind this proposal a most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom to help India towards her goal. I believe that this is more than a step towards the goal, it is a considerable stride forward and a stride on the right path

"I should make it clear that these proposals affect British India only and do not make any alteration in the relations of the Princes with the Crown Representative

"With the approval of His Majesty's Government, and after consultation with my Council, orders have been given for the immediate release of the Members of the Working Committee of Congress who are still in detention. I propose to leave the final decision about the others still under detention as the result of the 1942 disturbances to the Central Government, if formed, and to the Provincial Governments

"The appropriate time for fresh elections for the Central and Provincial Legislatures will be discussed at the Conference

"Finally, I would ask you all to help in creating the atmosphere of goodwill and mutual confidence that is essential if we are to make progress. The destiny of this great country and of the many millions who live in it depends on the wisdom and good understanding of the leaders both of action and of thought, British and Indian, at this critical moment of India's history

"India's military reputation never stood higher in the world than it does at present, thanks to the exploits of her sons drawn from all parts of the country. Her representatives at international conferences have won high regard for their statesmanlike attitude. Sympathy for India's aspirations and progress towards prosperity was never greater or more widespread. We have thus great assets if we can use them wisely. But it will not be easy, it will not be quick, there is very much to do, there are many pit-falls and dangers. There is on all sides something to forgive and forget.

"I believe in the future of India, and as far as in me lies will further her greatness. I ask you all for your co-operation and goodwill."

AMERY'S STATEMENT

June 14, 1945

Mr Amery, the Secretary of State for India, made the following statement in the House of Commons --

"During the recent visit of Field Marshal Viscount Wavell to this country His Majesty's Government reviewed with him a number of problems and discussed particularly the present political situation in India

"Members will be aware that since the offer by His Majesty's Government to India in March, 1942, there has been no further progress towards the solution of the Indian constitutional problem

"As was then stated, the working out of India's new constitutional system is a task which can only be carried through by the Indian peoples themselves

"While His Majesty's Government are at all times most anxious to do their utmost to assist the Indians in the working out of new constitutional settlement, it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the imposition by this country of self-governing institutions upon an unwilling India

"Such a thing is not possible, nor could we accept the responsibility for enforcing such institutions at the very time when we were, by its purpose, withdrawing from all control of British Indian affairs

'The main constitutional position remains, therefore, as it was The offer of March '42 stands in its entirety without change or qualification His Majesty's Government still hope that the political leaders in India may be able to come to an agreement as to the procedure whereby India's permanent future form of Government can be determined

"His Majesty's Government are however, most anxious to make any contribution that is practicable to the breaking of the political deadlock in India While that deadlock lasts not only political but social and economic progress is being hampered

"The Indian administration, over-burdened with the great tasks laid upon it by the war against Japan and by the planning for the post-war period, is further strained by the political tension that exists.

"All that is so urgently required to be done for agricultural and industrial development and for the peasants and workers of India cannot be carried through unless the wholehearted co-operation of every community and section of the Indian people is forthcoming

"His Majesty's Government have, therefore, considered whether there is something which they could suggest in this interim period, under the existing constitution, pending the formation by Indians of their future constitutional arrangements, which would enable the main communities and parties to co-operate more closely together

and with the British to the benefit of the people of India as a whole

"It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce any change contrary to the wishes of the major Indian communities. But they are willing to make possible some step forward during the interim period if the leaders of the principal Indian parties, are prepared to agree to their suggestions and to co-operate in the successful conclusion of the war against Japan as well as in the reconstruction in India which must follow the final victory

"To this end they would be prepared to see an important change in the composition of the Viceroy's Executive. This is possible without making any change in the existing statute law except for one amendment to the Ninth Schedule to the Act of 1935. That Schedule contains a provision that not less than three members of the Executive must have had at least ten years' service under the Crown in India. If the proposals meet with acceptance in India, that clause would have to be amended to dispense with that requirement

"It is proposed that the Executive Council should be re-constituted and that the Viceroy should in future make his selection for nomination to the Crown for appointment to his Executive from amongst leaders of Indian political life at the Centre and in the Provinces, in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Muslims and Caste Hindus

"In order to pursue this object, the Viceroy will call into conference a number of leading Indian politicians who are the heads of the most important parties or who have had recent experience as Prime Ministers of Provinces together with a few others of special experience and authority. The Viceroy intends to put before this conference the proposal that the Executive Council should be re-constituted as above stated and to invite from the members of the conference a list of names. Out of these he would hope to be able to choose the future members whom he would recommend for appointment by His Majesty to the

Viceroy's Council, although the responsibility for the recommendations must, of course, continue to rest with him and his freedom of choice, therefore, remains unrestricted

"The members of his Council who are chosen as a result of this arrangement would, of course, accept the position on the basis that they would wholeheartedly co-operate in supporting and carrying through the war against Japan to its victorious conclusion

"The members of the Executive would be Indians with the exception of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief who would retain his position as War Member. This is essential so long as the defence of India remains a British responsibility

"Nothing contained in any of these proposals will affect the relations of the Crown with the Indian States through the Viceroy as Crown Representative

"The Viceroy has been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place this proposal before the Indian leaders. His Majesty's Government trust that the leaders of the Indian communities will respond. For the success of such a plan must depend upon its acceptance in India and the degree to which responsible Indian politicians are prepared to co-operate with the object of making it a workable interim arrangement. In the absence of such general acceptance existing arrangements must necessarily continue

"If such co-operation can be achieved at the Centre it will no doubt be reflected in the Provinces and so enable responsible Governments to be set up once again in those provinces where owing to the withdrawal of the majority Party from participation, it became necessary to put into force the powers of the Governors under Section 93 of the Act of 1935

'It is to be hoped that in all the Provinces these Governments would be based on the participation of the main parties, thus smoothing up communal differences and allowing Ministers to concentrate upon their very heavy administrative tasks

"There is one further change which, if these proposals are accepted, His Majesty's Government suggest should follow

'That is, that External Affairs (other than those tribal and frontier matters which fall to be dealt with as part of the Defence of India) should be placed in the charge of an Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive so far as British India is concerned, and that fully accredited representatives shall be appointed for the representation of India abroad

"By their acceptance of and co-operation in this scheme the Indian leaders will not only be able to make their immediate contribution to the direction of Indian affairs, but it is also to be hoped that their experience of co-operation in Government will expedite agreement between them as to the method of working out the new constitutional arrangements

"His Majesty's Government consider, after the most careful study of the question that the plan now suggested gives the utmost progress practicable within the present constitution

None of the changes suggested will in any way prejudice or prejudge the essential form of the future permanent constitution or constitutions for India

"His Majesty's Government feel certain that given goodwill and a genuine desire to co-operate on all sides, both British and Indian, these proposals can mark a genuine step forward in the collaboration of the British and Indian peoples towards Indian self-Government and can assert the rightful position, and strengthen the influence of India in the counsels of the nations"

Further Elucidation

June 15

At a Press Conference held at the India Office on Friday afternoon, Mr Amery, Secretary of State for India, did his best to explain to newspapermen, particularly to Americans that the Viceroy's power of veto was intended only for exercising in the interest of India and not Britain.

An Indian correspondent questioning Mr Amery, asked "There is a strong feeling in India that the dollar pool should be dissolved, which would be against British interests Would the Viceroy veto such a measure?"

"That is just the kind of thing the Viceroy would not exercise his veto on, the British High Commissioner would put these points to the Council"

Mr Amery said he was glad to say that the proposals, which he had laid before Parliament yesterday and which Lord Wavell had announced at the same time, had met with very general approval in the press of all shades of opinion They had of course represented an agreed policy between all the main parties in Britain They were discussed in England, before the coalition broke up between Lord Wavell and members of the Government—Liberal, Labour and Conservatives and they were, therefore, an offer from the British people to the people of India

"I think that this offer represents the very utmost it is in our power to give" declared Mr Amery, "Not that we might not wish to give everything straight away, but we cannot do more at this moment without precipitating in India an internal conflict which would destroy hopes of further advance

"The difficulty really is this What is reserved in fact, is this reserve power of the Viceroy, on occasions, to overrule a majority decision of his council"

"Mr Amery hastened to assure that the offer was not a 'take it or leave it' proposition

"By the actual law of India, the Government is normally carried on by the decisions of a majority of the Viceroy's Council Under these proposals, if accepted, this would be a Council in which all the members except the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy would be Indians This reserve power is one which, as the Act makes clear, is not in the interests of Britain but in the interests of India Until there is a real democratic constitution in India, under which the various elements in India's national life feel they are secure and under which difficult constitutional problems are resolved as they are in Britain, by the method

of election, there must be some reserve of arbitral power to protect certain minorities”

Mr Amery went on to say that the veto also existed to guard against unfair treatment of the interest of the States pending such time as they also came into the future Indian Government

“In other words, it was India’s power and was a power to be exercised in the interests of India and not a power imposed by Britain in order to protect British interests. In order to make that clearer, Government had decided to appoint in India, as in the British Dominions, a United Kingdom High Commissioner, who would discuss with departments of the Government of India such economic questions as they would wish to urge, negotiate treaties and get rid of the idea that the Viceroy, in his capacity as head of his Council, was using his influence to induce his Council to accept things which are in Britain’s interest and not in India’s interest. The British Government wanted to make it quite clear that the reserve powers of the Viceroy were not used in any sense against Indian interests, but existed to protect interests, in this interim period, until India could agree upon a future constitution, or if she could not agree upon a single constitution, upon constitutions for a divided India

“This is reserve power and it is a power that has not once been used in the five years I have been Secretary of State. During all that time, in which there has been a large majority of Indian members of the Council, every decision has been taken by a majority of the members of the Council and not under orders from here. I don’t think that has been clearly realized, either in the world in general or in India. If Indian leaders as a result of the new proposals, find themselves in the Viceroy’s Council they will, I think, realise for the first time how wide are the powers which they enjoy

“While these powers represented the utmost length that Britain could go, they went a very great length indeed. There is nothing in the proposals, if accepted, that will debilitate members of the Council from dealing with the whole problem of reconstruction entirely as they please. It will

be for them to decide industrial, agricultural and health policy and so on. It will be in their power so far as British India is concerned, to decide who is to represent her as ministers in foreign capitals, and in which capitals India wishes to be represented. The proposals, if accepted, impose no real barrier or check upon India's freedom to pursue her own course, both at home and in the world. The checks, such as they are, are entirely concerned with difficulties in the Indian internal situation which, it was hoped, would be resolved before long. We hope the practical co-operation of Indian statesmen of all communities at the Council will make it easier for them to understand each other better and we hope before long to suggest ways and means for an approach to the ultimate constitutional problem.

"Three years ago, the Cripps offer proposed the setting up of the Constituent Assembly. That is one suggestion—there may be others."

LEADERS RELEASED

June 15

On the 15th of June, the Members of the Congress Working Committee still under detention, viz., Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Shanker Rao Deo, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Babu Rajendra Prasad, and Acharya Narendra Deo were released unconditionally. The Provincial Governments revoked orders which had declared the Working Committee as an illegal organisation.

MAHATMAJI'S STATEMENT

Panchgani, June 15

In a press statement issued on June 15th from Panchgani Gandhiji said:

"On the purely political aspect of the Viceregal broadcast, I prefer to say nothing. Now that the members of the Working Committee of the Congress are free, I can only give them my advice and it is they who have to shape

the policy of the Congress and speak and act with authority. As soon as I read the broadcast, I sent a wire to His Excellency the Viceroy drawing his attention to the fact that I have no "locus standi" as the recognised representative of the Congress.

That function belongs to the President of the Congress or whoever may be appointed to represent the Congress on a particular occasion. For several years I have acted unofficially as an adviser to the Congress whenever required. The public will remember that I went with the same unrepresentative character for my talks with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, and I can take up no other position with the British Government, in this instance represented by the Viceroy.

There is one expression in the Viceregal broadcast which certainly offends my ear and, I hope, will offend that of every politically-minded Hindu. I refer to the expression "Caste-Hindu". I claim that there is no such person, speaking politically, as a "Caste-Hindu", let alone the Congress which seeks to represent the whole of India which is yearning after political independence. Does not Veei Savaikar or Di Shyam Prasad or Dr Moonje of the Hindu Mahasabha represent all Hindus without distinction of caste? Do they not include the so-called untouchable? Do they themselves claim to be Caste-Hindus? I hope not. Of all politically-minded Hindus, I know that even the revered Pandit Malaviyaji, though he observes caste distinctions, will refuse to be called a Caste-Hindu, as distinguished from the other Hindus. The modern tendency in Hinduism is to abolish all caste distinctions and this I maintain in spite of my knowledge of reactionary elements in Hindu Society. I can only hope, therefore, that H E the Viceroy has allowed himself to make use of the expression in utter ignorance. I want to acquit him of knowingly wounding the susceptibilities of the Hindu society or dividing it. I would not have dwelt on this matter but for the fact that it touches the political mind of Hindus in its sensitive spot and carries with it political repercussions.

The proposed Conference can do much useful work if it is put in its proper political setting and is at the very

outset rendered immune from any fissiparous tendency. Undoubtedly all invitees might appear as Indians conjointly bent on achieving India's natural goal and not as persons representing several sections of Indian society. That is how I have viewed the Bhulabhai-Liaquat Ali understanding which I suppose laid the foundation for the forthcoming Viceregal conference. Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal has no such colouring as the Viceregal broadcast would seem to have. I am not ashamed of the part I have played in advising Shri Bhulabhai Desai when he consulted me about his proposal. Shri Bhulabhai Desai's proposal, as I understood it, attracted me as one interested in solving the communal tangle, and I assured him that I would use my influence with the members of the Working Committee and give my reasons for acceptance of his proposal and I have no doubt that, if both parties to the proposal correctly represent their constituents and have independence of India as their common goal, things must shape well. At this point, I must stop and the Working Committee has to take up the thread. It is for its members to declare the Congress mind on the impending questions."

Maulana Azad Invited

June 21

Maulana Azad received an invitation from Lord Wavell to attend the Simla Conference and accepted the same. He asked for an interview on June 24th.

WORKING COMMITTEE DECISION

Bombay, June 22, 1945

The Congress Working Committee met at Birla House on June 21, for the first time since '42. Maulana Azad presided. After a session of 13 hours in two days the Working Committee dispersed on June 22nd. The following statement was issued.

"The Working Committee, meeting after nearly three years has to consider many important problems, both national and international

"Members of the Working Committee, just released from prison, have not even had the opportunity to get into touch with our people and to acquaint themselves with the events which have taken place during the last fateful three years. However, in view of the existing circumstances, the Committee considered the proposals made by the Viceroy in regard to the Simla Conference fixed for 25th of June and it was decided that the President and other Congressmen invited to the Conference be authorised to attend.

"Certain directions have been given to them and they have been asked to seek elucidation in regard to many matters which still require clarification. It is probable that the Working Committee will meet again in the near future to consider these and other matters."

The members were asked to keep themselves in readiness to meet again at short notice. Directions were issued to Congress ex-Premiers and other invitees to attend the Simla Conference.

Informal Talks

June 24, 1945

Lord Wavell had informal talks separately with Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr M A Jinnah.

Simla Conference

June 25, 1945

Lord Wavell opened the Leaders' Conference at Simla at 11-30 a.m. Gandhi did not attend. He had communicated his decision not to attend. All other invitees were present. The Viceroy in opening the Conference said:—

Wavell's Speech

H E the Viceroy in his opening remarks to the Conference today said

"Before we begin on the agenda of this Conference the outcome of which have a momentous influence on the destiny of India, I feel there are a few words I should say to you

"First, I welcome you as men who by character and ability have risen to leadership in your provinces and parties. I have called you together from all parts of India at this critical moment in her history, to advise and help me in advancing India towards prosperity, political freedom and greatness. I ask you to give me that help in a spirit of broad co-operation towards the good of India as a whole

"It is not a constitutional settlement, it is not a final solution of India's complex problem that is proposed. Nor does the plan in any way prejudge or prejudice the final issue but if it succeeds, I am sure it will pave the way towards a settlement and will bring it nearer

"The statesmanship, wisdom and goodwill of all of us is here on trial, not merely in the eyes of India but before the world. I said in my broadcast that on all sides there was something to forgive and forget. We have got to rise above the level of old prejudices and enmities, and of party and sectional advantage and think of the good of India, the good of four hundred million people and how we can best combine to implement these new proposals made by His Majesty's Government for the advancement of India now and in the future. It will not be easy, and unless we can place our deliberations at a high common level, we shall not succeed

"You must accept my leadership for the present. Until there is some agreed change in the constitution I am responsible to His Majesty's Government for the good and tranquillity of India. I ask you to believe in me as a sincere friend of India. I will endeavour to guide the discussions of this Conference in what I believe to be best interests of this country

"On the column which stands in front of the Viceroy's House crowned by the star of India are engraved these words —

"In thought faith, in words wisdom, in deed courage, in life service, so may India be great"

"They will make a good guide for our Conference"

The Conference adjourned at 1' p m and resumed at at 2-30 p m In the afternoon Maulana Azad was the principal speaker Throughout the Conference he spoke in Hindustani He focussed on the ultimate goal of complete independence as enunciated by the 1942 August Resolution of the A I C C and made it plain that the Congress looked at the Wavell proposals just as an interim arrangement which would not bind anybody to the future constitution of the country But no interim arrangement could be isolated from the fundamental demand of the Congress and they must be taken together As to the party question, Maulana Azad is reported to have said that the Congress did not bother how many seats were given to which communities but it was interested in seeing by which door these representatives come Maulana Azad made it clear that any settlement arrived at by the Congress leaders must be endorsed by the A I C C and as such it was essential to lift the ban on the Congress organization and release all A - I C C members forthwith, as also other political prisoners

Maulana's speech was followed by speeches by other party leaders The session ended at 5 p m

June 26, 1945

The Conference met at 11 a m and adjourned at 12-30 p m The same evening Pandit G B Pant met Mr Jinnah at Cecil Hotel

June 27

The Conference met for one hour and again adjourned until Friday morning The same afternoon Mr Jinnah had a long talk with Lord Wavell

June 29

The Conference met in a tense atmosphere because the Congress and the League had failed to come to an understanding The Viceroy adjourned the Conference to July 14 Before he adjourned it, Lord Wavell asked the party leaders to submit by 6th July, a panel of names for his consideration for appointment on the Executive Coun-

cil He asked names only of persons 'who are capable of taking decisions and assuming responsibility for carrying out such decisions'

July 1

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived in Simla

July 2

Pandit Jawaharlal met Lord Wavell Their conversation lasted 2½ hours

July 3

The Congress Working Committee met and held discussions of a general character on the Wavell Plan

The Working Committee was reported to have proposed the following list

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,
 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
 Dr Rajendra Prasad,
 Mr M A Jinnah,
 Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan,
 Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan,
 Master Tara Singh,
 Sir Ardeshr Dalal,
 Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
 Mr Munuswamy Pillai,
 Mr B Mondal,
 Mr G L Mehta

July 9

The Muslim League Working Committee met and after a short session drafted a reply to the Viceroy in which it refused to submit the panel of names because the assurances which it had demanded of the Viceroy were not forthcoming

July 10.

The League working Committee decided to attend the Conference on 14th July

July 11

Mr Jinnah was granted an interview by the Viceroy who showed Mr Jinnah his list of Muslim names. Mr Jinnah expressed his inability to accept Lord Wavell's selection.

Mahatma Gandhi had an interview with the Viceroy the same evening.

July 12

Maulana Azad met the Viceroy.

July 14

The adjourned meeting of the Conference was held. Lord Wavell dissolved it with the following speech:

The following is the Viceroy's full statement:

"I must give the Conference an account of what has happened since we adjourned on June 29. As you know, my original intention was that the Conference should agree upon the strength and composition of the Executive Council, and that thereafter parties should send me lists of names. To these lists I would, if necessary, have added names of my own, and attempted to form on paper an Executive Council which might be acceptable to H. M. G., myself, and the Conference. I intended to discuss my selections with the leaders, and finally to put them to the Conference.

"Unfortunately, the Conference was unable to agree about the strength and composition of the Executive Council, and on June 29, I undertook, with the approval of the Conference, to endeavour to produce a solution not based on any formula agreed in advance. I asked the parties to let me have lists of names, and said I would do what I could to produce a solution acceptable to the leaders and to the Conference.

"I received lists from all parties represented here except from the European Group, who decided not to send a list, and the Muslim League. I was, however, determined that the Conference should not fail until I had made every possible effort to bring it to a successful ending. I, there-

fore, made my provisional selections including certain Muslim League names, and I have every reason to believe that if these selections had been acceptable here they would have been acceptable to H M G

My selections would, I think, have given a balanced and efficient Executive Council, whose composition would have been reasonably fair to all parties

"I do not find it possible, however, to accept the claims of any party in full. When I explained my solution to Mr Jinnah, he told me that it was not acceptable to the Muslim League, and he was so decided that I felt it would be useless to continue the discussion

"In the circumstances I did not show my selection as a whole to Mr. Jinnah, and there was no object in showing them to the other leaders. The Conference has, therefore, failed

"Nobody can regret this more than I do myself. I wish to make it clear that the responsibility for the failure is mine. The main idea underlying the Conference was mine. If it had succeeded, its success could have been attributed to me, and I cannot place the blame for its failure upon any of the parties

"I ask the party leaders to accept this view and to do all they can to ensure that there are no recriminations

"It is of the utmost importance that this effort to secure agreement between the parties and communities should not result in a worsening of communal feeling. I ask you all to exercise the greatest possible restraint

NEXT STEPS

"I have now to consider the next steps. I must remind you that whatever happens, the first two of three tasks mentioned in my broadcast—the prosecution of the war against Japan, and the carrying on of the administration and preparation of post-war development—must be performed by the Government of India for the time being in office. It will be my duty to see that these tasks are performed with the greatest energy that I can impose, and I cannot permit any hindrance to them

'I propose to take a little time to consider in what way I can best help India after the failure of the Conference. You can help best by refraining from recrimination. The war against Japan must be carried on, and law and order must be maintained, and until I see my way more clearly than I do now, it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to suggest any new move.

"No Government can carry on under the daily prospect of change or dissolution. I have to secure the stability and day-to-day efficiency of my Government, and it would be impossible to enter upon continuous or even frequent political discussions of this kind.

"Whatever decisions H.M.G. may take in the near future must, therefore, in all probability hold good for some little time.

"I thank you all for the help you have given me and for the restrained patience and understanding you have shown. Do not any of you be discouraged by this setback.

"We shall overcome our difficulties in the end. The future greatness of India is not in doubt"—A.P.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY INDIA OFFICE

London, July 14

The India Office today issued the following statement:

"His Majesty's Government greatly regrets to announce that the conference of leading politicians convened at Simla by the Viceroy of India with a view to the reconstruction of his Executive Council has failed to reach the requisite measure of agreement. These proposals were contained in the White Paper of June 14, and were announced to Parliament on that day.

"The Viceroy, who has most patiently and assiduously endeavoured to bring the parties together, has therefore terminated the sittings of the Conference."

Amery's Regret

The Secretary of State for India Mr. L. S. Amery has cabled to Lord Wavell: "On the conclusion of the Conference with Indian parties, announced in your statement

today, I desire on behalf of His Majesty's Government to place on record their appreciation of the patience and skill with which you have conducted these negotiations, and which make the failure of the conference all the more disappointing."

After Simla Failure

July 14

Mr Jinnah explained his thesis on the 14th July as follows:—

"On a final examination and the analysis of the Wavell Plan, we found that it was a snare. There was the combination consisting of Gandhi-Hindu Congress, who stand for India's Hindu national independence as one India and the latest exponent of geographical unity, Lord Wavell, and Glancy-Khizr, who are bent upon creating disruption among the Muslims in the Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement, which, if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we should have signed our death warrant.

For, let us honestly examine the Wavell Plan. Our stand has been, and we have repeatedly made it clear to the British Government times out of number since '40 that we cannot consider or enter into any provisional interim government unless a declaration is made by the British Government guaranteeing the right of self-determination of Muslims and pledging that after the war, or so soon as it may be possible the British Government would establish Pakistan having regard to the basic principles laid down in the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League, passed in March 1940. This was condition precedent No. 1 to our considering any provisional arrangement.

"The second condition was that we are not a minority but a nation, and we can only enter into provisional arrangement having regard to the necessities and exigencies of the moment created by the war and fully co-operate in the prosecution of the war and that in any arrangement we claimed equal number in the proposed executive

The Wavell proposals set at naught both these conditions and called upon us to make the severest sacrifice. I know that he in his broadcast said that these proposals are without prejudice to any future constitution or constitutions of India. While in one breath it is impressed upon us that these proposals are without prejudice to and do not prejudge the Pakistan issue, yet the plan in fact contradicts this in the next breath by its very terms.

It is obvious to any intelligent man that if we accept this arrangement the Pakistan issue will be shelved and put in cold storage indefinitely whereas the Congress will have secured under this arrangement what they want, a clear road for their advantage towards securing Hindu national independence of India. Because the future executive will work as a unitary Government of India we know that this interim or provisional arrangement will have a way of settling down for an unlimited period and all the forces in the proposed executive plus the known policy of the British Government, and Lord Wavell's strong inclination for a united India, would completely jeopardise us, for, I will quote Mr Amery, who has tried his best but in the results given us cold comfort and his statement is a very clear indication and a pointer to British policy. Speaking in the House of Commons, where he presented the White paper, he said as follows:

"The ideal to which we have always looked on is that of an all-India union in which the States would play their full part. At the same time we have also recognised the possibility that agreement between Hindus and Muslims on any form of an Indian unity may be unattainable. Any interim advance therefore must in no way prejudge the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on an united or divided India."

Next, in the proposed Executive we would be reduced to a minority of one-third, all the other minorities, such as the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Christians have the same goal as the Congress. They have then grievances as minorities, but their goal and ideology is and cannot be different from or otherwise than that of a united India. Ethnically and culturally they are very closely knitted to

the Hindu Society I am not against full justice being done to all the minorities and they should be fully safeguarded and protected as such, wherever they may be. But in the actual working and practice, invariably their vote will be against us and there is no safeguard for us except the Viceroy's veto, which it is well-known to any constitutionalist, cannot be exercised lightly as everyday business against majority decisions with regard to the policy and the principles that will have to be laid down and measures adopted, both administrative and legislative

On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back that even about the five members of the Muslim bloc which were allotted to us communal wise, which is the essence of Wavell proposals we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim representatives as our chosen spokesmen and there were two claimants—the Congress, which claimed two, and Glancy-Khizr on behalf of the Punjab claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-Leaguer nominee of Malik Khizr Hyat representing Punjab Muslims.

As I have said it is only the blind who cannot see that the All India Muslim League is the only authoritative representative organization of the Muslims. If we had accepted this position as presented to us by Lord Wavell we would have emerged out of this Conference minus everything and we would have betrayed our people. It would have been an abject surrender on our part for all we stand for and it would have been a death-knell to the Muslim League. This was the position which forced us and we found that it was impossible for us to accept this arrangement."

Maulana Azad's Speech

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, said that he very much appreciated Lord Wavell's efforts for the solution of the political deadlock. It was courageous of

the Viceroy to have taken upon himself the responsibility for the failure. But the responsibility was really not the Viceroy's but of others. When the question of strength and composition of the interim Government came up before the conference, Lord Wavell rightly adjourned the conference to enable the parties to come to terms but the Muslim League claimed the sole right to nominate all the Muslim representatives on the new Executive Council. This claim was untenable and unsustainable and the Congress could not accept this position. The Congress was not a Hindu body. It could not wipe out its history of fifty years. "I as a Muslim", declared Maulana Azad, "would not tolerate the Congress becoming a purely Hindu body." The Congress had a right to claim a share for the welfare and responsibility of the Muslims. The Congress President regretted that Lord Wavell's efforts to bring about an interim arrangement did not succeed.

Maulana Azad went on to say that the Viceroy had said repeatedly that the Muslim League's claim to represent all Mussalmans could not be accepted in its entirety. It was, therefore, clear who was responsible for the failure of the conference. The communal question had taken the upper hand and had become a stumbling block in the path of the progress of India.

The Viceroy had to take as much responsibility in solving the communal question as the Indian parties themselves because the British Government could not absolve itself of its responsibility for the position that had arisen. The existence of the third party was greatly responsible for the present position.

A firm attitude on the part of the Viceroy, said Maulana Azad, which was logical and based on the principle of justice and fairplay, alone could bring about a settlement of the communal problem. The Viceroy's present wavering and vacillating attitude was neither correct nor helpful. Hesitation and weakness could not bring about a solution.

Maulana Saheb to Newsmen

July 14

Maulana Azad in a press conference said

"We were thrown into a new world and despite the difficulties the Working Committee decided to participate in the Conference. We realised that vast changes had taken place in the international sphere and those changes had undoubtedly repercussions on the Indian problem. The inevitable result of those changes had been to bring to the forefront the question of Indian freedom and that of the freedom of Asiatic countries.

"We are very near our goal and the next stage is the goal itself. It does not matter at all what are the intentions of the British Government."

The Maulana continued, "While fully bearing in mind the fact that the present arrangement was purely temporary and interim, and should not possibly be regarded as a precedent for the permanent arrangement of the future, I should like to emphasise and make it perfectly clear that the Congress is a national organization, and it cannot possibly be a party to any arrangement, however interim and temporary it may be, that prejudices its national character, tends to impair the growth of nationalism or reduces it directly to a communal body."

During the course of his interviews with the Viceroy the Maulana emphasised the national character of the Congress organization and said that he attached considerable importance to the declaration that the provisional plan was intended as a preliminary step towards the achievement of the cherished goal of independence of India. He had also made it plain to His Excellency that the Congress Working Committee wished to co-operate in every reasonable way to help to resolve the present deadlock and the Congress had accordingly, in spite of adverse circumstances, come to Simla to participate in the Conference. But whatever decision the Working Committee might take, it would require to be confirmed and ratified by the All-India Congress Committee. The fact the A.I.C.C.,

and other Congress Committees were still under ban and a large number of Congressmen were in internment, detention or imprisonment was creating serious obstacle in their way

"I can say that the replies received from the Viceroy were satisfactory"

Maulana Saheb sought further light on the following issues

A The scope and function of the proposed External Affairs Department

B Every possible effort should be made to give a national character to the Indian Army and to bring about cordiality between the national army, the National Government and the people. The present barriers isolating them will of course have to go

C After the present war in South East Asia, it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government cannot support any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries in S E Asia, nor can it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries

D In regard to the Indian States while recognising that during the interim period, the powers of the Crown representative will continue, it is clear that the National Government will have to deal with many matters which overlap and have concern with the States in regard to trade, industry, Labour, etc. The barriers between the States peoples, the Princes and the members of the National Government and their associates should be removed so as to help in mutual discussions, consultations and consideration of common problems and their solution. The Maulana was satisfied with the Viceroy's replies

Amplifying his observation on the South East Asia countries the Congress President said that so far as the present situation was concerned, if the new arrangement had been successfully reached the war against Japan would have become not Britain's war against Japan, but India's war against Japan. There could not be two opinions as regards the question of liberating countries in South Asia. It would be the duty of the new Government

of India to carry out the war against Japan ceaselessly till these countries were liberated. But if it was the desire and intention of the powers that those countries should be restored to 'status quo' then surely the new Indian Government would not be a party to it. They would not permit a single Indian soldier or the expenditure of a single pie for the 'status quo' of the South East Asia countries.

On the question of caste Hindu-Muslim parity which formed the basis of the new proposals the Maulana said that he had impressed on the Viceroy that in the constitution of the new Government the criterion should be the political views held by parties and not religious belief. The Congress did not wish to attach undue importance to the fact of a few more Muslims being in the Government or there being a few less Hindus. "I raised all these issues at the Conference itself and I must say the replies His Excellency gave were to my mind reassuring."

After the settlement of those fundamental issues the Conference came to consider the strength and composition of the new Executive Council. The Conference was adjourned to enable private and informal talks to be carried on amongst the parties for a settlement.

"You know the conversation led to no results," said Maulana Sahab. "In the course of those informal talks the position taken up by Mr. Jinnah was that the Muslim League on behalf of the Muslims should nominate Muslim Members in the new Executive Council. The Congress found that such a position would be inconsistent with its basic national character. You must remember that as far as we are concerned it is not merely a question of seats, but one affecting the fundamental principle. We were prepared to accommodate the Muslim League but Mr. Jinnah took up an uncompromising attitude."

The Congress President continued that the Viceroy asked the various groups to submit lists of names from which His Excellency would choose after consultation with Party leaders. "Mr. Jinnah refused to submit names. In the interview I had with His Excellency on July 12, he told me that so far as the Muslim seats were concerned, he had

endeavoured to prepare a list and seek Mr Jinnah's approval. The Viceroy further told me that he did his best, but failed to persuade Mr Jinnah who insisted that the Muslim nominees should be nominated by the League Working Committee. The Viceroy was unable to agree to it and felt it was not profitable to proceed with the proposals at present.

Two points arise out of the present. The first is that the attitude of the Muslim League has been responsible for the failure of the Conference. The second point which emerges from the refusal of the Muslim League is that it is for Lord Wavell to decide whether to go forward or not. His Excellency has decided not to proceed for the present. In this connection I must say what I said at the Conference. The British Government could not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the communal problem here. So long as the third party remains in India these difficulties will remain as pawns on a chess-board and will continue to move in this fashion. Whether it is today or tomorrow they must take up a firm stand on a just and fair basis. There is no other alternative but to do that. And once a decision is taken, we must move forward. Those who are prepared to go forward must be allowed to go forward and those who wish to be kept out should be left out. Without determination nothing could be done. Wavering minds and faltering steps will never carry us forward in the path of progress. We must think before we take a step. And once we decide, hesitation is no virtue but a sign of definite weakness. There is nothing new in this so-called communal problem. I have no regrets whatsoever for the Congress stand in this Conference."

There was certain correspondence which he had exchanged with the Viceroy. He was not at liberty to reveal the same, but the country must know all about it to have a correct picture of the situation. He had written to His Excellency for permission to release them for publication.

In reply to another question, the Congress President contested the claim that the League was the sole representative and authoritative organization of the Muslims of India. In the provinces where Muslims were in a majority,

there was no League Ministry There was a Congress Ministry in the Frontier Province In the Punjab it was a Unionist Ministry In Sind Sir Ghulam Hussein depended on Congress support and the same position was in Assam It could not, therefore, be claimed that the Muslim League represented all the Muslims There was a large bloc of Muslims, who had nothing to do with the League

WAVELL-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

REGARDING SIMLA CONFERENCE

Telegram dated the 14th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji

"You may have heard my broadcast this evening The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers tomorrow

"I hope you will agree to attend the Conference which I have proposed I have suggested 11 a m on 25th June at the Viceregal Lodge Simla for the first meeting

"If you accept my invitation, I should welcome a discussion with you before the opening of the Conference and suggest, subject to your convenience 3 p m on the 24th June at Viceregal Lodge, Simla

"I have arranged to make a bungalow called 'Dell,' available for you in the hope that you will accept"

Telegram dated the 14th June, from Gandhiji to the Viceroy :

Have read in the Viceregal broadcast my name mentioned as an invitee I have repeatedly made clear that I represent no institution Therefore, I must not attend as representing the Congress That function belongs to the Congress President or whomsoever he nominates I send earliest intimation in order to avoid misunderstandings or misconception "

Telegram dated the 15th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji .

"Thanks for your telegram of 14th Whatever the technical position may be I shall value your help and hope you

will accept the invitation which was telegraphed to you last night. As regards representation of Congress, perhaps you will kindly let me have your final views after further considerations and any consultations you think necessary. I know you will appreciate the importance and difficulty of the task I have undertaken and do all you can to help."

Telegram dated the 15th June, 1945 from Gandhiji to the Viceroy .

"Received kind wire of invitation. For reasons given in my wire sent you last night, I have no place in your conference. As an individual I can only tender advice. May I then say that there are no caste and casteless Hindus who are at all politically minded? Therefore, the word rings untrue and offensive. Who will represent them at your table? Not Congress which seeks to represent without distinction all Indians who desire and work for independence. Hence the existence of Hindu Mahasabha claiming to represent Hindus as such. I apprehend that even that body will disclaim representing Caste Hindus."

Moreover broadcast seems rigorously to exclude use of word independence. Accordingly it seems to me to demand revision to bring it in line with modern Indian thought. I suggest publication four wires."

Telegram dated 16th June, 1945 from Gandhiji to the Viceroy .

"In reply to your telegram of yesterday, I am posting letter."

Telegram dated 16th June, 1945 from the Viceroy to Gandhiji

"Many thanks for your telegram of 15th June. I have also seen your statement in today's newspapers."

"As regards your attendance at the Conference I will await your letter referred to in your telegram of June 16th which I have just received."

"I assure you term 'Cast Hindus' was not used with offensive intention. Meaning is that there should be equality between Muslims and Hindus other than members of

Scheduled Castes Subject to this, exact composition of Council would of course have to be decided after discussion at Conference

"On question of independence I invite your attention to Secretary of State's speech to Parliament on 14th June as published in Indian press Following is the relevant passage which begins

"The offer of March, 1942, stands in its entirety That offer is based on two main principles First, no limit is set to India's freedom to decide her own destiny whether as a free partner in the Commonwealth or even without it Second, that this can only be achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by Indians to which the main elements are consenting"

"It would not be practicable to modify the terms of my broadcast This is only a simple statement on the proposals approved by His Majesty's Government, and my intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussion before the Conference which I hope as you do yourself, will be held in a friendly atmosphere and without party bitterness

As you suggest, I am releasing our telegrams to the Press"

The following is the text of correspondence between them .

Letter dated 16th June, 1945, from Mr M K. Gandhi to H E. the Viceroy .

"Dear Friend ' I thank you for your telegram of yesterday received at 3-45 p m My second telegram acknowledging your kind telegraphic invitation evidently crossed yours I am sending you this letter in reply, instead of wiring, because I am anxious that you should understand my position thoroughly However, I am sending you a wire intimating the despatch of this letter For ready reference, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my Press message which was issued yesterday in the morning I would like you to go through it

"While it is true that my position is technical, the reality of it is truer. My official and legal connection with the Congress was deliberately, and with consent of All-India Congress Committee, severed in order to enable me all the better to serve the common cause. This position, therefore, cannot be changed at will. In the forthcoming official Conference I can have no official position. My presence in it will change the official colour, unless I became an official representative of the Congress. But if you think that my help is desirable and that without being a member on the Conference I am likely to be useful I shall make it a point to be at your service before and even during the Conference proceedings, assuming, of course, that the Working Committee wishes likewise.

"I want to cite an analogy. You may have known the late Deenabandhu, as C. F. Andrews was affectionately called by us. He severed his official connection with the Cambridge Mission and the Church in order to serve religion, India and humanity better. The position he occupied as a valuable link between India and England whether official or non-official and between all classes and parties, grew as days went. If I can, I would love to occupy such a position. It may never come to me. Man can but try.

You have suggested further consideration and consultation, both of which I have done. I am within an easy distance of Yeravda Central Prison, where Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Shankarrao Deo were recently transferred from Ahmednagar Fort. Almost immediately after their discharge from the jail yesterday, they motored to Panchgani and are still with me. I have shown them all the necessary papers and they concur with me in what I am writing.

"In the task you have undertaken, of which I hope, I fully appreciate the difficulty and delicacy, you certainly need the assistance and goodwill of all the parties you can. The Congress help you naturally cannot have without the Congress being officially represented at your table. The first and also perhaps the main purpose of the discharge of the remaining members of the Working Committee will be frustrated unless you secure the presence at your table

of the President of the Congress or whomsoever he and his Committee may appoint for the purpose. If my supposition is correct, my immediate advice is that you should invite the President of the Congress. I expect that the ban on the Congress has been or will be lifted to the extent it still exists.

I am, Yours sincerely,
M K GANDHI

Telegram dated 17th June from H E the Viceroy, to Mr M K. Gandhi :

Thank you for your letter of 15th June. I understand your position. I am looking forward to seeing you on 24th and hope means may be found for you to take part in Conference. I shall be grateful if you will communicate the following message to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from me.

"I invite you to attend or to nominate duly authorised representative to attend conference at Viceregal Lodge, Simla at 10-30 a.m. on Monday 25th June. Accommodation will be arranged for representative if required."

"I have not released your letter or this telegram to the Press but have no objection to their being published."

Telegram dated the 17th June, from Mr M K Gandhi, to H E the Viceroy.

"Deeply appreciate your wire received yesterday evening. In order to regularise the procedure and facilitate despatch of work without disturbing the number of members of the Conference, I suggest immediate invitation to Congress President to attend Conference or depute Congress nominee."

"If fixity of parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unchangeable religious division will become officially stereotyped on the eve of independence. Personally, I can never subscribe to it nor Congress if I know its mind. In spite of having overwhelming Hindu membership, Congress has striven to be purely political. I am quite capable of advising Congress to nominate all non-Hindus and most decidedly non-caste Hindus. You will quite unconsciously but equally surely defeat the purpose of the Conference,

if parties between caste Hindus and Muslims is unalterable. Parity between Congress and League is understandable. I am eager to help you and the British people, but not at the sacrifice of fundamental and universal principles. For, it will be no help. If you desire the text of yesterday's letter earlier, I can telegraph its contents."

Telegram dated 17th June from Mr. M. K. Gandhi, to H. E. the Viceroy.

"Many thanks for your prompt reply to my letter of 16th. But in the absence of reply to my wire of even date, you will admit that Congress position and mine remains uncertain. Hence I must not, even on your behalf invite the President without the acceptance of my necessary amendment. You will not, and cannot, according to your wire of 16th let the Conference discuss the question. Therefore to my great regret, I have taken no action on your wire under reply. The Working Committee has not still been called. Private telegraphic communication is tardy. Time appears to be against the date fixed by you. With all my willingness to help, I hope you will appreciate unavoidable delay. I suggest your altering the date and clarifying the issue raised by me and if the clarification is satisfactory, I am sending your invitation directly for avoiding delay. I should inform you that Congress Premiers are held up pending Working Committee's decision. I am not releasing these communications pending final decision. But in this you shall judge."

Telegram dated 18th June, from H. E. the Viceroy to Mr. M. K. Gandhi.

"Thank you for your two telegrams of yesterday. I think, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad should have my invitation as soon as possible, and I have accordingly telegraphed it to him at Calcutta."

"Mr. Amery's statement in Parliament and my broadcast constitute terms of reference to Conference which I still hope will assemble at Simla on 25th. I clearly cannot change my broadcast and as I have already told you, I do not think it desirable to discuss its details before the Con-

ference None of the persons or parties concerned is expected or required to accept or reject the proposals now The only immediate question is whether the proposals are worth discussing at the Conference and it is to that question that an answer will be most helpful I still think the Conference should assemble on 25th It may last some time and delay before it begins will not improve prospects of success I am releasing your letter of 16th June, my telegrams of 17th June and this telegram to the press "

Telegram dated June 18 from Mahatma Gandhi to H. E. the Viceroy .

The following is the full text of the telegram

"Grateful for your prompt, frank and full reply and also for directly inviting the Maulana Saheb Members, being free at the Conference to accept or reject the proposals, clears the ground for the invitees to attend the Conference This leaves them free to discuss the 'pros' and 'cons' at the Conference

"My objection to the inevitability of parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus stands If that view is incapable of being altered by the British Government my advice to the Congress will be not to participate in the formation of an Executive Council

"The Congress has never identified itself with Caste or non-caste Hindus and never can, even to gain independence, which will be one-sided, untrue and suicidal. The Congress, to justify its existence for winning the independence of India, must remain for ever free to choose the best men and women from all castes and, I hope, always will That it has for the sake of conciliating the minorities' chosen men to represent them though they have been less than best, redounds to its credit, but that can never be pleaded to justify or perpetuate distinction based on caste or creed The Hindu Mahasabha is the body claiming to represent solely Hindu interests

"Subject to the Working Committee's wishes I shall hope to present myself at Simla on the 24th instant, but owing to my strong views you can cancel the engagement without the least offence I expect that this wire and

reply if any will be published I am leaving for Poona on Tuesday at 2 p m "

JINNAH-WAVELL CORRESPONDENCE

The following telegrams were exchanged between Mr Jinnah and the Viceroy

Telegram from Lord Wavell dated New Delhi, June 14.

"You may have heard my broadcast this evening The text and that of the Secretary of State's simultaneous announcement in Parliament will appear in newspapers to-morrow I hope you will agree to attend the Conference which I have proposed I have suggested 11 a m on June 25, at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, for first meeting If you accept my invitation I should welcome a discussion with you before opening Conference and suggest subject to your convenience 5 p m on June 24 at Viceregal Lodge, Simla I have had accommodation reserved for you at Cecil Hotel in hope that you will accept Viceroy

Telegram from Mr Jinnah to His Excellency Lord Wavell, dated June 15

"Your invitation June 14 Shall be glad meet you on June 24, for discussion but as regards your proposals particularly Conference require clarification which I hope, will be available at our meeting on June 24 This will enable me to consult my Working Committee in the light of such clarifications and decide upon our course of action May I request you, therefore, to postpone date Conference for fortnight as time fixed is too short for a meeting of the Working Committee members all over India I reciprocate your appeal for co-operation and goodwill and hope that the Muslim League will make its contribution to any just and reasonable interim provisional settlement Please reply Jinnah "

The Viceroy in a telegram to Mr Jinnah said.

"I have now received your telegram to me of 15th June I am grateful for your assurance of co-operation My broadcast was a very simple statement of the proposals

and my intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. I do not think it advisable to enter into detailed discussions before the Conference meets. I would, therefore, prefer to adhere to the date for opening of Conference on June 25 and hope that you will attend.

"Perhaps you could arrange for your Committee to meet in Simla on June 24. As your telegram has been published, I am sending this to press."

Mr Jinnah sent the following telegram to the Viceroy.

"Received your telegram of 16th. I note that your intention is to deal at the Conference itself with any points requiring clarification. It, therefore, follows that till we have a complete picture of your proposals as details would be no less vital than the fundamentals, we shall not be able to deal with them. Until I know full details of the scheme and am in a position to place the entire scheme before my Working Committee, it will serve no useful purpose to convene the meeting. Further, I hope that you will understand that calling Working Committee meeting at Simla as suggested by you on or before 25th is fraught with difficulties. First, they will be kept waiting indefinitely till the Conference concludes. Second, it would not be easy for me to make arrangements for their suitable accommodation and travel from various provinces within the short time available. However, after my meeting you on 24th for discussion as suggested by you, I may be in a better position to understand the situation and arrange things accordingly."

The Viceroy sent the following telegram dated June 17 to Mr Jinnah

"Thank you for your telegram of June 16. May I take it (a) that you and others invited who are members of the Muslim League will attend the Conference on the 25th but (b) that you will wish to consult your Working Committee when the proposals have been made clear to you at the Conference. I suggest that a long adjournment of the Conference might be most inconvenient to others at-

tending the Conference and that your Committee might meet in Simla before the end of June I would do my best to arrange travel and accommodation. But accommodation is very difficult and if the members of your Committee can stay with friends to the greatest possible extent, I shall be obliged."

Following is the text of the correspondence between Mr Jinnah and the Viceroy

Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General to Mr Jinnah, dated Simla, the 29th June, 1945

Dear Mr Jinnah,

The following is the action which His Excellency would like you to take, if, after consultation with your Working Committee, you are able to accept the suggestion he made at this morning's meeting of the conference

(1) To prepare and send him a list giving the names of members of the Muslim League who in your opinion could suitably be included in the proposed Executive Council. The number of names in this list should be not less than eight or more than twelve

(2) If you think you can usefully suggest, for possible inclusion in the Executive Council, the names of persons of any community who are not members of the Muslim League, you are at liberty to add them to your list, keeping them distinct from the names of Muslim League members.

His Excellency hopes he made it clear this morning that this is entirely optional

His Excellency's intention is to scrutinise the lists sent to him and to see whether from them and possibly from additional names of his own, he can, on paper, form an Executive Council likely to be acceptable to the parties and to His Majesty's Government. If so, he will consult leaders including yourself, and thereafter decide whether it is worthwhile making definite proposals to the Conference

Yours sincerely,

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Lord Wavell, dated the 7th July, 1945:

Dear Lord Wavell,

I placed before my Working Committee the suggestion made by Your Excellency at the last meeting of the Conference and communicated to me by your private secretary in his letter dated the 29th June, 1945. The Working Committee after careful consideration desire me to convey to you their views which are

(1) With regard to your suggestion for submitting a panel of names of the members of the Muslim League for inclusion in the proposed Executive Council, the Working Committee desires to point out that when a similar proposal was made by Your Excellency's predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, in connection with his offer of August, 1940, the Working Committee opposed it and, when its objections were brought to the notice of Lord Linlithgow, he dropped the proposal and suggested another alternative in his letter dated the 25th of September, 1940, addressed to the President of the All-India Muslim League, an extract from which is given below

'I appreciate, however, the difficulties which you made clear to me, confronted you in connection with the formulation of the panel which I had earlier suggested to you, and in the light of our discussion I am content that the selection of representatives, while resting with the Governor-General, should be based in the case of the Muslim League (and, should they so desire, of the other parties to be represented in my Council) not a panel formally submitted but on confidential discussion between the leader of the party concerned and myself''

This alternative was acceptable to the Muslim League. The Working Committee is of the opinion that the procedure settled on the previous occasion should be followed in the present case so far as the Muslim League is concerned.

(2) Further the Working Committee is emphatically of the opinion that all the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim

League, subject to a confidential discussion between Your Excellency and the President of the Muslim League, before they are finally recommended by you to the Crown for appointment

The Working Committee feels very strongly on this point and regards it as one of the fundamental principles

Besides the foregoing certain other points were also discussed in the Working Committee particularly the question of providing an effective safeguard against unfair decisions of the majority. While the Committee appreciated the remarks in the statement of the Secretary of State in the House of Commons that the power of veto will be exercised by the Viceroy to protect the minority interests, it was felt that some other effective safeguard, would be necessary in the interest of smooth working of the interim arrangement. It was, however, thought that this question could be settled after the strength and the composition of the Executive Council was decided upon.

I have given in the above paragraphs the unanimous opinion of my Working Committee and I am ready and willing, if you so desire, to meet you and explain the reasons and the grounds for the decision arrived at by the Working Committee

Yours sincerely,

M. A. JINNAH

Letter from Sir Evan Jenkins to Mr Jinnah, dated 9th July, 1945

Dear Mr Jinnah,

His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of 7th July, and to say that he will be glad to see you at 4 p.m. this afternoon, or later this afternoon if that is more convenient to you. Perhaps you would be kind enough to ask your Secretary to ring me up and confirm the time.

Yours sincerely

E JENKINS

Letter from Lord Wavell to Mr Jinnah dated the 9th July, 1945 —

Dear Mr Jinnah,

At the end of our talk yesterday evening you said that

I could make your problem easier if I replied in writing to your letter of 7th July. I do not think you expect any comment now on the first and third points in that letter. Our talk was concerned with the Muslim League demand that Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League before they are finally recommended to the Crown for appointment.

I fully appreciate your difficulties, but regret that I am unable to give you the guarantee you wish i.e., that all the Muslim members of the proposed new Council shall necessarily be the members of the Muslim League. As I explained to you, I cannot commit myself to give similar guarantee to any other party. I have to attempt to form an Executive Council representative, competent, and generally acceptable, but of course I cannot compel any person or any party to co-operate in my own solution if they do not wish to do so.

It will help me greatly if you will let me have names from the Muslim League and I sincerely hope you will do so. I asked for eight, but will certainly accept five if you do not wish to send more. You can consider later whether any solution I put forward is acceptable to you.

During the next two or three years decisions of great importance will have to be taken by the Government of India, whatever its composition may be. These decisions on demobilisation, economic development, taxation, trade and so on cannot wait, and it is the hope of H.M.G. that the Executive Council responsible for them will be one in which the major political parties are represented. It will be of course, my principal duty to see fairplay between all parties not only in the composition of the proposed Council but in its working.

I need the active help of your colleagues and yourself, and I am sure you will give it to me. I have no objection to your showing this letter to your colleagues but it is not intended for publication.

Yours sincerely,

WAVELL.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Lord Wavell, dated the 9th July 1945:

Dear Lord Wavell,

I thank you for your letter of the 9th July which I placed before my Working Committee. The Committee, after giving its very careful consideration to the matter, desires me to state that it regrets very much to note that Your Excellency is not able to give the assurance that all Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council will be selected from the Muslim League. In my letter of the 7th July I mentioned that the Committee considers this as one of the fundamental principles, and not the circumstances, I regret, I am not in a position to send the names on behalf of the Muslim League for inclusion in the proposed Executive Council, as desired by you.

I should like to assure Your Excellency, that it is has been the earnest desire of the Committee and myself to assist you in every reasonable way, but it is not possible for us to depart from our fundamental principles.

I need not, therefore, at present say anything more with regard to the other points raised.

Yours sincerely,
M. A. JINNAH

Letter from the Secretary to the Governor-General to Mr. Jinnah, dated the 10th July, 1945:

Dear Mr Jinnah,

His Excellency asks me to thank you for your letter of the 9th July. He will have to take two or three days to consider the position and will write to you when he has decided what to do.

Yours sincerely,

WORKING COMMITTEE DECISIONS

SIMLA, July 15

"Both for national and international reasons, India must attain the status of an independent and sovereign State, having a place in the highest councils of the

nations, and occupying a position to contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and freedom of the world," says a resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee at the last sitting of one of the longest sessions in the history of the Committee which has just ended

The Committee held as many as eighteen sittings spread over thirteen days Mahatma Gandhi was present during all afternoon meetings

During this long session the Committee reviewed the situation in the country, considered the Wavell plan, endorsed the action of the Congress President in accepting the Wavell plan, prepared a panel of names for submission to the Viceroy, considered the internal reorganisation of the Congress and passed a resolution on the San Francisco Charter

The Committee met at 2 p.m. today and passed the following resolution on the San Francisco Charter

"The Working Committee welcomes the efforts that have been made by the United Nations to build up an international order to maintain peace and security and to develop friendly relations among the nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples While appreciating the work of the San Francisco Conference in this respect and realising that any world organisation must of necessity be related to the realities of today, the Committee regrets that the position allotted to the smaller nations in the Charter is one lacking all effectiveness and the great powers not only dominate and completely control the organisation but are placed above and beyond the law they have themselves helped in framing

"These great powers have indeed strengthened and consolidated their own position in the world and have shown no inclination to give up their colonial possession and the special powers and privileges they enjoy at the expense of dependent peoples According to the Charter as framed the world organisation will only be effective when none of the great powers are interested in the dispute Where there is such an interest, as there is likely to

be in most international disputes, a great power veto will prevent any action being taken

"The Committee especially regrets that the declaration regarding non-selfgoverning territories is vague and unsatisfactory and is little better than the old mandate system of the League of Nations which was a signal failure in the past

"The discussion in the San Francisco Conference on the object of trusteeship and, in particular, the strenuous objections raised by some powers to the use of the word independence, are evidence of the fact that imperialist powers are still functioning, in the old imperialist way and intend to retain and exploit their colonial possessions. The Committee is of opinion that a full and frank recognition of national independence, within the framework of a bona fide international order, of colonial territories is necessary to give reality to the purposes and objectives of the new organisation and to lay the foundations of a stable peace.

"The Committee has noted that the delegates from India to the San Francisco Conference represented the alien Government and in no way the people of this country, and their attitude towards problems affecting India and other dependent and colonial territories was often opposed to the policy of India considered as independent. Such representation at international conference is an affront to India and a fraud upon them and is likely to mislead foreign nations.

"The fact of India's dependence on foreign authority has resulted in giving her an anomalous position in an organisation of sovereign States, and deprived her of a permanent seat in the Security Council of the new organisation, which should be her due. Both for national and international reasons, India must attain the status of an independent and sovereign State, having a place in the highest councils of the nations, and occupying a position to contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and freedom of the world'

LABOUR PARTY VICTORIOUS

Amery unseated

July 26

The results of the General Elections in the United Kingdom were announced. The Labour Party scored an outright Victory. A notable incident was the defeat of Mr Leopold Amery. The party position as announced at 9-45 p.m. (G.M.T.) was

Total for Churchill 210

Total for Attlee 417

Mr Churchill resigned as Premier. His Majesty invited Mr Attlee to form the Government and Mr Attlee accepted the invitation.

Aug 1 and 2

The Viceroy held a Conference with Governors of Provinces.

Aug 3

Mr Pethick Lawrence is appointed the Secretary of State for India. He became a Baron of the United Kingdom.

Aug 7

Mr. Mahendra Chowdhury was executed in Bihar (Bhagalpur).

Aug 15.

Mr Attlee announced Japanese surrender.

Aug 15

His Majesty opened the new Parliament. Referring to India the King said

"In accordance with promises already made to my Indian peoples, my Government will do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, early realisation of full self-government in India."

AZAD CALLS FOR SETTLEMENT

Simnagar, August 20

Maulana Azad says The war which has just ended led to the postponement of many urgent problems In some cases this was inevitable In many others the war was made an excuse for such postponement The final end of the war has suddenly brought all these problems to the forefront and war conditions can no longer be pleaded as an excuse

Both from the national and international points of view the question of India's freedom, political and economic, is now an urgent and vital issue on which depend, not only the well-being of four hundred millions but also to a large extent, the future peace of the world

No More Delay

This question, always vital and important, has now been precipitated to the very forefront and there can be no further delay in its solution The solution has now to be a final and permanent one Such a settlement can only mean the establishment of a democratic government for a free and independent India co-operating in the international domain with the other free governments of the world

As a part of this settlement, and for the brief period between now and the assumption of office by the Government of Free India under a constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly, Interim Governments both in the centre and the province will be necessary in order to deal with the acute distress prevailing in the country and with post-war problems, as well as to arrange the preliminary processes of the Constituent Assembly But such interim arrangements can only be possible as a part of the final settlement

Communal Settlement

It has been stated on behalf of the British Government that a Constituent Assembly should be summoned at the conclusion of hostilities Hostilities have now ceased The

only excuse that may be advanced for a possible delay in convening the Constituent Assembly is the lack of a solution of the communal problem. This should offer no difficulty as the Indian National Congress has gone a long way to find a solution

Self-Determination

In regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem, as it has taken shape today, with the demand on the part of the Muslim League for a partition of the Country, the Congress has given the most earnest consideration to it, desiring as it does, the well-being and freedom of the country as a whole and of each group or community in it. It has recognised the right of self-determination of any area provided that this is the established and declared will of the inhabitants of that area, but subject to the exercise of such right not resulting in the compulsion of any other group.

The Congress is convinced that the free Indian state can only be based on the willing co-operation of its federating units and of its principal communities and cannot be founded on compulsion. Further, the Congress has declared that the federating units should have the largest conceivable amount of freedom to function as they will, subject only to certain essential bonds for their common welfare. Even independent countries adjoining each other have to develop these common bonds and links and can no longer live in isolation.

Thus the Congress has gone to the further limit in recognising the right of self-determination even to the extent of separation in certain circumstances and with certain safeguards for the communities affected and for the country as a whole. It has done so in the earnest hope that when the problems are viewed in proper perspective and without passion and prejudice, the facts of the situation will induce all concerned to co-operate together in building up a free and democratic Indian state, with every freedom to the constituent units to develop according to their needs and wishes. But if any such unit or group of adjoining unit decided otherwise, it can take charge of its

own destiny. It will be open to the representatives of such a unit in the Constituent Assembly to advance its claims and a decision on this should not rest on the majority vote of the Assembly but on the vote of the representatives in the Assembly of the areas concerned.

To Be Referred To Working Committee

While the Congress position is clear, doubts and suspicions have not wholly disappeared and I feel that in order to remove these some clarification is needed. I propose therefore to place this matter before the next meeting of the Working Committee and I am confident that the desired clarification will be forthcoming.

"So far as I am concerned, after long and careful deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that the division of India is wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of Indian Muslims themselves.

But I realize also that the present political atmosphere of the country is surcharged with suspicion and doubt and a large section among Indian Muslims does not seem to be in a mood to view realities in their proper perspective. This section can be expected to do so only when it is assured that the determination of their destinies rests with Muslims themselves without external compulsion. When this is realized, suspicion and doubt will largely disappear and efforts to reach a desirable and mutually satisfactory solution of the communal problem will be fruitful.

Get Rid Of Fear Complex

In the great tasks before us, all of us must get rid of the fear complex. I appeal to my fellow Muslims to view the question in this perspective realizing that their future lies in their own hands and there can be no compulsion on them. I appeal also to my Hindu and Sikh and other fellow citizens to appreciate this approach to a problem which has troubled us so much and has been a bar to our progress. With this approach on the part of Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs, I have no doubt that the atmosphere of distrust will undergo a change and give place to a climate of mutual trust. Even the section of Muslims I have in

view can then be trusted to begin to examine the question of separation dispassionately

It should be borne in mind that if the right of self-determination is conceded to any area in such circumstances as prevail in our country, it is not to encourage fissiparous tendencies, but to remove the very cause of distrust, and therefore the desire for separation"—A P.

WAVELL'S SECOND TRIP TO LONDON

Aug 21

Lord Wavell announced that he was again going to London to consult with the Labour Government. He also announced that general elections would be held both to the Central Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures.

Bans Lifted

Aug 22

The Government of Bombay cancelled its orders declaring unlawful the All-India Congress Committee, the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, etc.

The Governments of other Provinces also took action on similar lines.

Subhash Babu's Death

Aug 23

The death of Deshghaurav Subash Chandra Bose, twice President of the Congress, on Aug. 18, was announced by the Japanese News Agency.

Elections In India Under Greatest Freedom

LONDON, Aug 23

Mr Arthur Henderson, Under-Secretary of State for India, answered his first batch of questions on Indian affairs in Parliament today.

He told Mr Peter Freeman (Labour) that he had considered the proposal recently made by Mr Rajagopalachari,

former Premier of Madras, for effecting an end to the deadlock in India but regretted that he had no statement to make at present

Earl Winterton (Conservative) asked if Mr Henderson was aware that this was only one of the scores of claims put forward by people who claimed to speak on behalf of India everyone of which was refuted by the Congress or the Muslim League

Mr Henderson replied "A good many proposals have been put forward, and it will be the desire of the British Government to consider them"

Mr Sloan (Labour) asked if Mr Henderson would make a statement about the release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of the prohibitory orders in respect of political organisations, right of assembly and movement of persons within British India

Mr Henderson replied that these matters were under consideration by the Secretary of State, Lord Pethick Lawrence, and he was not at present in a position to make a statement on them

Mr Reginald Sorensen (Labour) asked if Mr Henderson would say firstly, approximately, when elections for the Provincial Governments will take place, secondly, whether this was to be preceded by full restoration of civil liberty regarding meetings and the press, and thirdly whether the franchise disqualification arising from having suffered a term of imprisonment would be withdrawn

Mr Henderson Elections to the Provincial Legislature will be held during the coming cold weather and should be completed early next April

Matters raised in the second and third parts of the question are under consideration and I hope that by the time the House reassembles I shall be able to give a more definite reply

Mr Sorensen asked whether Henderson appreciated the urgency of enabling those who had been repressed until now to have some voice in the decision of the electorate

Mr Henderson "It is the intention of the British Government that the forthcoming elections shall be held under conditions of the greatest freedom"

Mr Sloan asked if prohibition of the publication of the daily news paper "National Herald" could now be withdrawn, the printing plant restored and compensation for damage and loss made to the owners

Mr Henderson said that this was a matter for the authorities in India, but he was ascertaining the facts from them

Mr Sloan "Will the Minister impress upon the Government of India that now that the war is over there is not the slightest danger with regard to that aspect of the matter and that it is high time a fair measure of freedom was extended in India?"

Mr Henderson "Government will take all relevant considerations into account"

Indian Independence, signal for Coloured Peoples' Freedom

LONDON, Aug 23

The granting of India's political freedom will be the signal for the rest of the coloured peoples to make a united effort to achieve their own independence, said Mr Samson U Morris, Secretary of the League of Coloured Peoples, in an interview today

"Any political freedom that India obtains is bound to react favourably towards the freedom of all other subject peoples," Mr Morris said

"When subject peoples have anything in common, that what benefits one, benefits all I do not think that freedom will be given to other subject people, because India has received it, but the granting of independence to India is bound to be a prelude to the loosening of the bonds of domination in other parts of the world The great fight put up by India for her freedom has heartened the rest of the coloured subject peoples of the world who will rejoice with India at the progress made

"It is utterly useless for the British Government to say that some coloured peoples are unfit to govern themselves

"Coloured peoples throughout the world are interested enough in international affairs to fight and die for what they consider to be right. They have every right today in lending a hand in the shaping of the new world for which they fought

"One thing that stands out in the fight against domination is the fact that coloured peoples know what they want. They are not going to be put off with substitutes or anyone else's conception of what they want

"Coloured peoples by their contribution in manpower and material resources in the war against Fascism, by their service in Ethiopia, East Africa, the Western Desert, Italy and Germany, and by their services in Burma in the war against Japan have earned the right to expect that they shall benefit as the result of a new concept of international co-operation which has been acquired in the course of the grim ordeal of the war of liberation against Fascism'

LORD WAVELL ARRIVES IN LONDON

Aug 26

Lord Wavell arrived in London

Attlee at Blackpool

Sept 12

Mr Attlee, Prime Minister, in his address to the Trade Union Congress held at Blackpool, said

"The Labour Government is giving the greatest attention to the great problems, such as that of self-government for the Indian peoples"

Sept 15

Lord Wavell returns to India

WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

Sept 12 to 18

The All-India Congress Working Committee commenced its most recent meeting on Sept 12. Between Sept 12 and Sept 16 the Committee passed a number of very important Resolutions which are quoted below. Some of them are draft Resolutions for the All-India Congress Committee.

Greetings to Nation

The first Resolution reads

"The A-I C C, at its first meeting after more than three years of wanton suppression by the British Government, desires to convey its greetings and congratulations to the nation for the courage and endurance with which it withstood the fierce and violent onslaught of British power, and its deep sympathy to all those who suffered during these three years of military, police and ordinance rule. The Committee regrets that in some places the people forgot and fell away from the Congress method of peaceful and non-violent action, but realises that the provocative action of the Government in effecting the sudden and widespread arrests of all well-known leaders, and brutal and ruthless repression of peaceful demonstrations, goaded them to rise spontaneously to resist the aimed might of an alien imperialist power which was trying to crush the spirit of freedom and the passionate desire of the Indian people to gain independence.

The earnest appeal made by the A-I C C at its last meeting held on August 8, 1942, for creating conditions necessary for full co-operation with the United Nations in the cause of world freedom was ignored and the suggested attempts to solve the Indian problem by negotiation were answered by the Government by an all out attack on the

Indian people and by subjecting an unarmed India to many of the horrors of war which accompany an invasion

"Three years of fightfulness have left their long trail behind them, of death and agony and suffering and avoidable man-made famine which took its toll of millions of lives, and an administrative system which is full of corruption and incompetence, totally incapable of handling or solving India's problems. Yet these years have also demonstrated the courage of the Indian people to meet Governmental repression and have steeled and hardened them in their resolve to gain freedom and deliverance from foreign rule

"The world war is happily over but its long shadow still darkens the world and prospects of future wars are being considered. The appearance of the atom bomb as a weapon of war, with its frightful and horrible powers of destruction, has brought to a crisis the immoral and self-destructive elements of the present-day political, economic and spiritual structure of the world. Civilisation is likely to destroy itself unless it gives up its imperialist and acquisitive tendencies and bases itself on the peaceful co-operation of free nations and on the maintenance of the dignity of man. The end of the war has brought no freedom to the colonial and dependent countries and the imperialist powers are again engaged in the old contest for domination over others

"The A-I C C reiterates its national and international objectives laid down in its resolution of August 8, 1942 and its conviction that the independence of India is essential for world peace and must be the basis for the freedom of the Asiatic and other dependent nations. The independence of India must be unequivocally recognised and the status among the United Nations must be that of an independent nation, co-operating with others on an equal basis for the establishment of a world order of peace and freedom."

Fresh Elections To Legislatures

The following is the full text of the resolution on elections:

"The announcement that fresh General Elections will be held for the Central and the Provincial Assemblies has been made in a manner and in circumstances which arouse suspicion. There has been no announcement of the policy which the British Government intends to pursue or of the subsequent steps and the objective aimed at. It is only in the context of the full picture that a preliminary step can be judged and a proper decision taken. No such picture has so far been presented by the British Government and it would appear that the old policies, largely laid down and controlled by the reactionary groups of the permanent services in India, are still being pursued. The present constitution by itself, and even more so the 1919 Act governing the Central Assembly, are completely out of date. Every transitional step can only be viewed in the light of present declaration of Indian independence and the rapid attainment of it in actual working.

Electoral Rolls

"The electoral rolls are many years old, incomplete, full of errors and omissions and containing many false entries. During these years there have been many changes in population due to war exigencies, migration, natural calamities and other causes. Adequate opportunities are not being offered for their revision, and the conditions for free and fair elections are not present. While the Congress stands for adult franchise, the existing franchise for the Centre is limited to a very small number of persons, numbering less than one per cent of the population.

"The Central Assembly is still governed by the Act of 1919 and is, for all practical purposes, an advisory body with no real powers, whose advice and recommendations are frequently rejected or over-ruled by the Governor-General. To continue such an ineffective and important Central Legislature and that too on the old franchise and basis is a mockery of all claims to democracy. The sudden dissolution of the Legislatures in some Provinces has em-

phasised the hostility of the present Governmental authorities to even the possibility of popular Governments in the meantime, and has been done in a manner which is an affront to the people

"Nevertheless, to demonstrate the will of the people and on the issue of the immediate transfer of power, the A-I C C resolves that the forthcoming elections be contested and directs the Working Committee to take all necessary steps in this behalf "

Congress Ideal Of 'Swaraj'

The following is the full text of the third resolution to be placed before the A-I C C

"The Congress, from its earliest beginning 60 years ago has tried to win Swaraj for all the people of India. But the content and implications of the word 'swaraj' have progressively varied with the march of time as also the people towards their goal. So have the means. Thus, 'swaraj' at one time meant self-Government of the people under the tutelage and fostering care of the British Government in India. The means were strictly legal and constitutional. As efforts so circumscribed proved insufficient, violence was resorted to from time to time, but this was sporadic, unorganised and secret. At each stage, the Government of India responded reluctantly and in a niggardly manner with some sort of reform accompanied by repression, leaving behind on every occasion a legacy of increasing discontentment

"In time the Congress became a mass organisation, basing its methods of action on peaceful and legitimate means and adopted a revolutionary programme of progressive non-co-operation, including civil disobedience, which was confined in certain circumstances to individuals or groups or areas and to the redress of certain grievances at each stage more and more people began to join the struggle for freedom. In 1929-30, the Congress finally defined 'Swaraj' as complete independence for India and ever since 1930, January 26 has been observed as Independence Day when the pledge for Independence is reaffirmed

"In August 1942, the urgency of the situation and the perils that confronted India led to a programme of immediate severance of the British connection being conceived and this was to be adopted if the method of negotiated settlement failed. The resolution to this effect had hardly been adopted by the A-I C C late at night when in the early hours of the following morning, the members of the Working Committee, the A-I C C and other Congressmen and Congresswomen were arrested in Bombay and all over India and other repressive measures were adopted by the Government.

"People stunned, leaderless and incensed gave vent to their just anger in the manner they thought best, both violently and non-violently but the Government violence in every case put the popular acts of violence into the shade. As a result, military rule on a scale never before known in India became an established fact and sought to choke the voice and liberty of the people.

"In June 1945, the British Government in India released the members of the Working Committee and convened a small and, what was intended to be, fairly representative conference for the purpose of forming an interim National Government. It was understood that any decision arrived at by the conference would be acted upon by the Government. Suddenly, however, the chairman of the meeting, in the person of the Viceroy brought the proceedings to an end, not because there was no general agreement among the members but because one of the participant groups would not co-operate in the formation of an interim Government. No charge veiled or open has been or can be brought against the Congress for the break-up.

"The noteworthy fact is that throughout these events, the yearning of the people for swaraj has increased, they have become more and more awakened to the need for freeing themselves from the foreign yoke, and the distrust of the foreign Government, in spite of the professions to the contrary has increased. It was hoped as would now appear, against hope that although the conference broke up, as it did, the Government would carry out the

promise read into the Vicelegal declarations that an Indian National Government giving effect to the voice of the people would soon take place of the anarchical one nominated by the Government

"If that hope had been well founded, the Government would have, without any mental or other reservations, released all political prisoners, whether detained without trial or convicted under farcical procedure. Some releases have undoubtedly taken place but not in answer to popular demand and expectation. Many still remain behind prison bars. Bans on some organisations and restrictions and disabilities on individuals have not yet been removed and civil liberties are restricted.

"The continuance of Section 93 rule in the Provinces and the recent dissolution of the legislatures in a number of provinces are significant and outstanding instances of the policy of the Government, which is determined to hold on to its authoritarian power and to exercise it arbitrarily and autocratically. It is not possible to derive any hope for the future in the shape of frank co-operation on the part of the Government with the people in bringing them their long overdue freedom and independence.

"The method of negotiation and conciliation which is the keynote of peaceful policy can never be abandoned by the Congress, no matter how grave may be the provocation, any more than can that of non-co-operation, complete or modified. Hence the guiding maxim of the Congress must remain negotiation and settlement when possible and non-co-operation and direct action when necessary."

Indian National Army

The Congress Working Committee resolution urging the release of officers and men and women of "the Indian National Army" reads

"The A I C C has learnt with concern that large numbers of officers and men and women of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya and Burma in 1942, as well as some Indian soldiers from the western fronts, are at present in various Indian and foreign prisons awaiting trial or other decision of the authorities. In view of all

the circumstances prevailing in India, Malaya, Burma and elsewhere at the time of the formation of this army and subsequently, and further in view of the declared objects of this army, these officers and men and women should have been treated as combatants and prisoners of war and discharged at the conclusion of hostilities

"The A-I C C is, however, strongly of opinion that, for other additional reasons of far-reaching consequences and in view of the termination of the war, it would be a tragedy if these officers, men and women were punished for the offence of having laboured, however mistakenly, for the freedom of India. They can be of the greatest service in the heavy work of building up a new and free India. They have already suffered heavily and any additional punishment will not only be unjustified, but will cause sorrow in innumerable homes and to the Indian people as a whole, and will widen the gulf between India and England. The A-I C C therefore, earnestly trusts that these officers and men and women in this army will be released

The A-I C C also trusts that the Indian civilian population of Malaya, Burma and elsewhere who joined the Indian Independence League will in no way be harassed or subjected to any penalty

"The A-I C C further trusts that any sentence of death already passed on any Indian soldier or civilian in connection with any activities connected with war will not be carried out"

Warning to U.K.

"As it appears to be the policy of the British Government to obstruct and delay the formation of a people's national Government in India, it may take some time for such a Government to function. During this period the present unrepresentative and irresponsible Government may enter into various kinds of commitments on behalf of India, which may not be in the interests of the Indian people and which may create shackles preventing growth and development. The A-I C C, therefore, informs the United Nations and all others concerned that the present

Government of India derives no power and authority from the people of India and in no way represents them. It is imposed on the Indian people by alien power and authority and can in no way commit India to any agreement affecting the vital interests of the people. Should any such agreement be entered into, the people's representative Government, on assuming power, will have the right and duty to examine it and, in the event of this being injurious to the interests of the Indian people, to refuse to be bound by it."

Mr Jinnah Pleads for Mercy

Quetta, Sept 16

Referring to the Government of India's notification regarding the treatment to be given to the Indian soldiers who had joined the enemy, Mr M A Jinnah says

"I am glad to learn from the notification issued in the Press that the Government of India is considering at present very carefully the treatment to be given to the Indian soldiers who had joined the enemy and, I hope, that they will be dealt with leniency becoming a victor and that justice will be tempered with mercy. The Muslim League and myself will do utmost to promote the interests of Indian soldiers who have fought so heroically—men and officers of all ranks in their demobilisation, and thereafter, when they come back to their homes, as they will in short time

"I am sure the Government of India will see that relations of those who have sacrificed their lives or have been wounded will be looked after and fully rewarded

"The Muslim League has the deepest sympathies for them and will do everything that lies in its power to stand by them and give every help in the matter"—A P I

People's Concern For I N A.

September 16

The fate of the Indian National Army and its present position were discussed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with

the "United Press of India" Special Representative, who sought an exclusive interview with him this morning prior to the meeting of the Congress Working Committee Pandit Nehru expressed himself most emphatically on the question of any discriminatory treatment of officers, men and women of the National Army

"Large numbers of people of India", said Pandit Nehru "have been and are actually concerned with the fate of these Officers, men and women of the Indian National Army and the Hindustan Azad Fauj who are at present in various prisons in India and other countries. Probably, the All-India Congress Committee will also consider this matter which affects not only innumerable homes but the people as a whole as well as British Indian Army

"It has to be remembered that this Indian National Army consisted not only of officers and men from the British Indian Army but recruited large numbers of individuals in Burma, Malaya and Siam. Some efforts, I am told, are being made to isolate these civilian elements from the Army elements and to treat the former more harshly. That would be highly improper and will naturally be resented. The elements of this Army deserve to be considered as combatants and discharged now that the war has ended

"There are also, I understand, a number of Indian soldier prisoners from various western fronts in the war. They also stand on the same footing as others

"Then there are vast numbers of Indian civilians in South East Asia who joined the Indian Independence League. There must be no discriminatory treatment and no punishment. Indeed any such treatment would involve punishing the whole people"

SELF-DETERMINATION

(This Resolution is not to be placed before the A.I.C.C.)

The resolution on the question of self-determination says "As some misapprehensions have arisen in regard to certain resolutions of the A-I.C.C. and of the Working Committee passed in 1942, relating to the future constitu-

tion of India, the Working Committee re-stated the position as follows

"In accordance with the August 1942 resolution of the A-I C C it will be for a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly to prepare a constitution for the Government of India, acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the residuary powers vesting in the units. The fundamental rights as laid down by the Karachi Congress and subsequently added to, must form an integral part of this constitution. Further, as declared by the A-I C C at its meeting held in Allahabad in May, 1942 the Congress cannot agree to any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian union or federation.

"The Congress, as the Working Committee declared in April, 1942 has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world, when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless the Committee also declared, it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the union consistently with a strong national state"—A P I

September 11

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in an interview with A P A reiterated his long-held belief that the British do not seriously intend to permit India to attain self-Government or win freedom and cited the recent conference at Simla as an added proof. He declared that Lord Wavell went to

London on his trip preceding the present one with an agreement already reached between the Congress and the Muslim League for setting up an interim Government. Under its terms, the two groups would have parity on the Viceroy's Council. Instead of accepting this arrangement, Mr Patel said, the British had attempted to split the Muslim League by substituting their own proposals which called for including Muslims from the Punjab Unionist Party on the Viceroy's Council. That arrangement was refused by the Muslim League. Mr Patel insisted that this demonstrated that the British did not really wish to see the two rival parties in India come to an agreement.

September 18

The text of the resolution on the Sterling balances which will be placed before the AICC reads

"The AICC has noted that enormous credit balances due to India have accumulated and are kept in London in Sterling. These balances are not available for utilisation for India's own immediate needs of industrialisation and general economic development. They have arisen out of the supply of goods and services provided by this country for Britain's war effort. The goods and services which these balances represent were obtained from India mostly at controlled prices, and the suggestions made in certain British quarters that the amount of these balances is inflated is contradicted by the actual facts, as recorded and admitted by a British Parliamentary Committee which recently investigated the subject. The British demand, therefore, for a scaling down of the amount is wholly unwarranted, and India cannot submit to any settlement of this problem which involves a sacrifice of her just claims and great injury to her future development. The AICC is of the opinion that every effort must be made for an early settlement of the question of India's Sterling balances so that they may be utilised for the planned economic development of the country."

AZAD'S ADVICE TO NON-LEAGUERS

September 15, 1945

The Congress President told the Associated Press to-day that he proposes to advise all non-League Muslims like Nationalist Muslims, Ahrars, Majlis and others to come under one banner and contest the forthcoming elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies on the issue of a united India, which, he emphasised, is in the best interests of the Muslims

"I have no doubt," said Maulana Azad, "the ideal of a united India will find substantial support in the Muslim majority provinces such as the Punjab, Bengal, North-West Frontier and Sind" API

Congress Limit on Self-Determination

"Congress can by no means go farther than its original stand envisaged in its Delhi resolution on April 6, 1942, which was subsequently confirmed by the All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad. That is the furthest limit the Congress can go in regard to the issue of self-determination", observed Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, in an exclusive interview to the 'United Press' of India this afternoon. The Working Committee had given its best consideration to this important issue, devoted considerable time to it and ultimately arrived at this decision

The 'United Press' representative, discussed with the Congress President about the latest political developments in Britain leading to the formation of the Labour Government there, Lord Wavell's trip to London, the Government of India's policy of gradual release of political prisoners in India and the lifting of the ban on the Congress organisation and enquired if he considered all this as a happy augury for the constitutional settlement of India

"I would rather prefer to wait and watch all developments in this connection", said the Maulana. "At the moment I can only say this that we shall judge the British Government by their actual action"

‘Have you any message for the people of the country on the eve of the elections?’ asked the United Press representative while parting to which the Congress President replied that the message of the Congress for the people would be laid down clearly in its election manifesto which would be announced as soon as it was ready

DESAI-LIAQUAT PACT

Interviewed on Nawabzada Liaquat Ali's statement about the Desai-Liaquat pact, Mr Bhubhai Desai said

“On my return to Bombay my attention was drawn to the statement made by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan regarding the pact, the text of which he has now released to the Press. I must say that the publication agreeably surprised me. When I saw a Press interview given by Gandhiji on July 28, in which he had suggested that the pact should be made public I immediately got into touch with the Nawabzada and suggested to him that the text be issued to the Press, because the document speaks for itself and reveals all the material facts about which, I fear, the Nawabzada's statement contains inaccurate statements. Unfortunately, the Nawabzada had then not found it possible to approve of the publication of the pact. I note now that he has thought fit to publish it himself without any further reference to me. The better course perhaps would have been for it to have been jointly issued by us with an agreed statement. The statement, he had issued along with the text of the pact has given to the public a misleading picture.

In the first place, the statement fails to explain why in spite of the existence of the pact, which is now specifically admitted, the Nawabzada found it necessary during the past several months to repeatedly deny in public the existence of any sort of understanding between us. The public will realise now how embarrassing the situation was for me when the Nawabzada on the floor of the Assembly and in his other utterances was at pains to dispel the report that he and I had, however, provisionally, agreed upon a joint course of action for resolving the political deadlock.

If I then forbore and declined to be drawn into a public controversy, it was because I still clung to the hope of finding a satisfactory solution of our immediate problems.

The Nawabzada and I had several conversations in connection with the matter and during the course of these conversations I had asked him to mention the matter to Mr Jinnah and later on I gathered from him that he had done so after these conversations. I met Mahatma Gandhi on January 3 and 4 at Sewagram and mentioned to him the substance of the conversations and on getting his general approval I went to Delhi, had further conversations with the Nawabzada, told him that I had Mahatma's support in these proposals and that I would reduce them to writing. I prepared two copies of the document and met the Nawabzada on January 11 and both the documents were initialled by both of us. He kept one and I have the other. At that time also I had informed him that the substance of the proposals had been put by me before Gandhi and he had approved of them.

Extract from Pact

"The last but one paragraph runs as follows"

"On the basis of the above understanding some way should be found to get the Governor-General to make a proposal or a suggestion that he desires an 'interim' Government to be formed at the centre on the agreement between the Congress and the League and when the Governor-General invites Mr Jinnah and Mr Desai either jointly or separately, the above proposals would be made desiring that they are prepared to join in forming the government'.

"This quotation from the pact clearly bears out that the Nawabzada must have had conversation with Mr Jinnah, otherwise the assurance therein contained could not have found place in the document initialled by him.

"This matter has ceased to have any significance now on account of its repudiation by the Nawabzada as well as by the President of the League and have no desire to revive the controversy, but as I gather from that the true facts should be placed before the public, I have given this

answer to remove any wrong impression which may have been created in the public mind ”

TEXT OF THE DESAI-LIAQAT PACT

as published by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali.

“The Congress and the League agree that they will join in forming an interim Government in the Centre. The composition of such Government will be on the following lines

- (a) An equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the Central Executive (the persons nominated need not be members of the Central Legislature),
- (b) Representatives of minorities (in particular the Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs),
- (c) The Commander-in-Chief

“The Government will be formed and function within the framework of the existing Government of India Act. It is, however, understood that, if the Cabinet cannot get a particular measure passed by the Legislative Assembly, they will not enforce the same by resort to any of the reserve powers of the Governor-General or the Viceroy. This will make them sufficiently independent of the Governor-General.

“It is agreed between the Congress and the League that, if such interim Government is formed, their first step would be to release the Working Committee Members of the Congress.

“The steps by which efforts would be made to achieve this end are at present indicated to take the following course

“On the basis of the above understanding, some way should be found to get the Governor-General to make a proposal or a suggestion that he desires an interim Government to be formed in the Centre on the agreement between the Congress and the League, and when the Governor-General invites Mr Jinnah and Mr Desai either jointly or separately, the above proposals would be made

declaring that they are prepared to join in forming the Government

The next step would be to get the withdrawal of Section 93 in the Provinces and to form, as soon as possible, Provincial Governments on the lines of a coalition "

September 16

The following resolutions were passed by the Working Committee

Assembly Elections Sub-Committee

(1) Resolved that an Assembly Elections Sub-Committee be constituted to take such steps as may be necessary for selection of candidates and for organising elections to the legislatures. The committee shall consist of the following persons with powers to co-opt members from provinces for dealing with matters relating to their respective provinces. The committee shall report to the Working Committee from time to time and be guided by its directions. The committee will consist of the following members of the Working Committee

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Mr Asaf Ali, Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Mr Shankerrao Deo

Manifesto

(2) As it is desirable that a manifesto containing the policy and programme of the Congress be issued for the information of the public and the guidance of Congress candidates in the forthcoming general elections for the legislatures, resolved that such a manifesto be prepared by the Working Committee and placed before the AICC for consideration and adopting at a subsequent meeting. In the event of the elections for the Central Assembly taking place before this meeting of the A-I-C-C, the Working Committee may issue a brief manifesto for those elections, the principal manifesto being issued later for the provincial elections

CHIMUR AND ASHTI

Of all the 1942 disturbances in this County the one that drew the greatest and countrywide attention was that known as Chimur (Chanda District) and Ashti (Wardha District) episode. Exact details of the disturbances were not then clearly discernible and whether mob action was provoked in any degree became the moot point. The broadest outline put nearly one hundred lives lost on the side of the Government. Some of these were cases attended with every form of brutality associated with 'mob fury'. On the other hand, estimates of the number killed on the people's side would vary from two thousand to ten thousand. Many of these doubtless resulted from cold-blooded retaliatory action by the forces of Government. Serious allegations were made of misbehaviour by troops at Chimur. The awful happenings on which the allegations rested were preceded by disturbances, in the course of which four officials were killed. Moved by the happenings in Chimur Prof J P Bhansali of Mahatma's Ashram at Sewagram was driven to the extreme measure of sacrificing his life for the vindication of the honour of womanhood as he termed it. He posthaste went to Delhi and met Executive Councillor Mr M S Aney on November 1, 1942. Mr Aney gave a patient hearing but pleaded inability to do anything. He could not go near his people and mingle his tears with them at the tortures inflicted upon them by our foreign rulers. Thereupon Prof Bhansali decided to undertake a fast at Mr Aney's house.

The background of the picture of Chimur and Ashti presented such a state of panic. There was conflict between authorities and people, exceeding commotion prevailed in Chimur and Ashti. There was censorship of news, no outsiders were allowed to enter those places. The climax was reached with Prof Bhansali's fast. When the fast was on, the entire Indian Press was gagged. There was a battle royal waging between the entire Indian Press and the Authorities, so much so that all the nationalist

papers closed down for a day Bhansali staked his all and won the cause Messrs Khare and Aney saw the places for themselves The interest taken by Shrimati Anasuyabai Kale and Dr Khare succeeded in bringing about an honourable settlement with the Government Then came the trial and judgment and not one but fifteen men were condemned to death in a body Once again the country was agog, both the people and the Press took up the challenge Were they really guilty of the crime they were alleged to have committed? Truth compelled that the picture was incomplete and that the other side was not correctly painted The fellow countrymen of these victims in every province on the land grew conscious and demanded with one voice to stop this march to gallows Perhaps never before in history were fifteen men so near and yet so far away from the hangman's noose Must fifteen men die for incidents arising out of cases in which the agents of the bureaucracy also had to shoulder considerable blame? This became the question of the day, even the widows of the murdered officers demanded that justice be tampered with mercy A 'Habeas Corpus' application was made to show that the execution warrants were defective Dr T J Kedar argued that hanging of Ashti prisoners would be murder all along, he pleaded for justice not mercy, the application was dismissed Shrimati Anusuyabai Kale, Deputy Speaker of C P Assembly set out on her mission again, collected funds etc, sent an appeal to the Privy Council One more attempt to save failed The Privy Council refused to grant time for despatch of papers from India It all seemed to be over It was a chapter of futile attempts to destroy the hangman's noose Then came the Mahatma On the rejection of mercy petition and after Gandhiji's last minute appeal in April 1945 had failed, he launched his protest "If the news is correct that the Ashti and Chimur petition has been rejected it is disturbing I am opposed to State hanging in every case, but most so in cases like these Whatever was done by the people on and after August 8, 1942 was done under excitement If these hangings are now carried out, it will be cold blooded murder and worse,

because it will be done ceremoniously and under the name of so-called law. It will leave behind nothing but a great increase in the already existing woeful bitterness. How I wish that the threatened hangings were given up. They can be if there is the united voice of India against the impending sentences and such other contemplated sentences."

The Government became contemplative, the old man had spoken and made the rulers thoughtful. Still it was a game of watch and wait and most certainly a game of tragic suspense for those fifteen men of Chimur and Ashti. Was it life or death, death or life? The scale would not turn till one fine morning the nationalist papers splashed in headlines Lord Wavell's order of commutation of death sentences to one of transportation for life. The nation was grateful to the Viceroy, the commutation order extended to the other cases in India too. Bitterness was saved by withholding the death sentences which, if accomplished, would have been beyond recall especially when both Britain and India are trying so hard for a settlement.

LORD WAVELL'S BROADCAST

September 19, 1945

The Viceroy said "After my recent discussions with His Majesty's Government in London, they authorised me to make the following announcement

"As stated in the gracious speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, His Majesty's Government are determined to do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India. During my visit to London they have discussed with me the steps to be taken

"An announcement has already been made that elections to the Central and provincial legislatures so long postponed owing to the war, are to be held during the coming cold weather. Thereafter, His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that ministerial responsibility will be accepted by political leaders in all provinces

"It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to convene as soon as possible a constitution-making body, and as a preliminary step they have authorised me to undertake, immediately after the elections discussions with representatives of the Legislative Assemblies in the provinces, to ascertain whether the proposals contained in the 1942 declaration are acceptable or whether some alternative or modified scheme is preferable. Discussions will also be undertaken with the representatives of the Indian States with a view to ascertaining in what way they can best take their part in the Constitution-making Body

"His Majesty's Government are proceeding to the consideration of the content of the treaty which will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India

"During these preparatory stages the Government of India must be carried on and urgent economic and social problems must be dealt with. Furthermore, India has to play her full part in working out the new

world order His Majesty's Government have, therefore, further authorised me as soon as the results of the provincial elections are published, to take steps to bring into being an Executive Council which will have the support of the main Indian parties "

That is the end of the announcement which His Majesty's Government have authorised me to make It means a great deal It means that His Majesty's Government are determined to go ahead with the task of bringing India to self-government at the earliest possible date They have, as you can well imagine, a great number of most important and urgent problems on their hands but despite all their preoccupations they have taken time, almost in their first days of office, to give attention to the Indian problem, as one of the first and most important That fact is a measure of the earnest resolve of His Majesty's Government to help India to achieve early self-government

The task of making and implementing a new constitution for India is a complex and difficult one which will require goodwill, co-operation and patience on the part of all concerned We must first hold elections so that the will of the Indian electorate may be known It is not possible to undertake any major alteration of the franchise system This would delay matters for at least two years But we are doing our best to revise the existing electoral rolls efficiently After the elections, I propose to hold discussions with representatives of those elected, and of the Indian States to determine the form which the Constitution-making Body should take, its powers and procedure The draft declaration of 1942 proposed a method of setting up a Constitution-making Body, but His Majesty's Government recognise that, in view of the great issues involved and the delicacy of the minority problems, consultation with the people's representatives is necessary before the form of the Constitution-making Body is finally determined

The above procedure seems to His Majesty's Government and myself the best way open to us to give India the opportunity of deciding her destiny We are well aware

of the difficulties to be overcome but are determined to overcome them. I can certainly assure you that the Government and all sections of the British people are anxious to help India, which has given us so much help in winning this war. I for my part will do my best, in the service of the people of India, to help them to arrive at their goal, and I firmly believe that it can be done. It is now for the Indians to show that they have the wisdom, faith and courage to determine in what way they can best reconcile their differences and how their country can be governed by Indians for Indians."

BRITISH PREMIER'S ASSURANCE

September, 20 2-45 AM (IST)

The following is the text of Prime Minister Attlee's broadcast

The King's speech at the opening of new Parliament contained this message 'In accordance with the promises already made to my Indian peoples, my Government will do their utmost to promote in conjunction with leaders of Indian opinion early realisation of full Self-Government in India'

Immediately after assuming office, Government turned its attention to Indian affairs and invited the Viceroy to come home in order to review with him the whole situation, economic and political. These discussions have now concluded and the Viceroy has returned to India and has made an announcement of policy.

You will remember that in 1942 the coalition Government made a Draft Declaration for discussion with Indian leaders, commonly known as the Cripps' offer.

It was proposed that immediately upon cessation of hostilities steps should be taken to set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India. Sir Stafford Cripps took that offer to India but it was unfortunately not accepted by leaders of Indian political parties, the Government is, however, acting in accordance with its spirit and intention.

The first step necessary is to get as soon as may be, as democratic a representation of the Indian peoples as

possible. War has in India, as in this country, prevented elections being held for a long time and the Central and Provincial Legislatures must now be renewed. Therefore, as has already been announced, elections will be held in India in the coming cold weather. Electoral rolls are being revised as completely as time permits and everything possible will be done to ensure free and fair elections.

The Viceroy has today made known our intention to follow their election by positive steps to set up a Constituent Assembly of Indian elected representatives, charged with the task of framing a new Constitution. Government has authorised Lord Wavell to undertake preliminary discussions with representatives of new provincial legislatures as soon as they are elected to ascertain whether the proposals of the Cripps Offer are acceptable as they stand, or whether some alternative or modified scheme should be preferable. Discussions will also take place with representatives of Indian States.

Government has further authorised the Viceroy as an interim measure to take steps after the elections to bring into being an Executive Council, having the support of the main Indian parties, in order that India may deal herself with her own social and economic problems, and may take her full part in working out a new world order.

The broad definition of British policy towards India, contained in the Declaration of 1942, which had the support of all parties in this country, stands in all its fullness and purpose. This Declaration envisaged the negotiation of a Treaty between the British Government and the Constitution-making body. Government is giving immediate consideration to the contents of such a Treaty. It can be said here that in that Treaty we shall not seek to provide for anything incompatible with the interests of India. No one, who has any acquaintance with Indian affairs, will underestimate the difficulties which will have to be surmounted in the setting up and smooth operation of a Constitution-making body. Still greater is the difficulty which will face the elected representatives of the Indian people in seeking to frame a constitution for a great continent containing more than 400,000,000 human beings.

AZAD-WAVELL CORRESPONDENCE

While the All-India Congress Committee was in session on 21st, 22nd and 23rd September, the General Secretary of the AICC circulated as a confidential document the correspondence that passed between Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Congress President and Lord Wavell as Governor-General. It was not meant for publication because the formal consent of Lord Wavell for releasing it was not forthcoming. The correspondence, however, did leak out and was published in the columns of certain newspapers. Therefore, the authentic text is incorporated in this compilation.

AZAD-WAVELL CORRESPONDENCE

Azad to Wavell

Armsdell,
July 7, 1945

Dear Lord Wavell,

On behalf of the Congress I am sending you a list of the names of the members of the proposed Executive Council, except for one name of a Sikh nominee, which I hope to send in a day or two. This list consists of both Congressmen and non-Congressmen and contains names for the entire Executive Council. According to this, the Council will consist of 15 members apart from H.E. the Viceroy and H.E. the Commander-in-Chief. We have felt that this number is desirable at present in order to give representation to as many minority communities as possible. The Congress attaches special value to minority representation.

We have given a list of fifteen members and no more. My Committee have endeavoured to choose persons not for the honour the posts will give but for the burden they will entail. We have considered the whole question of assuming this responsibility from the point of view of its being a step positively in the direction of the independence of India, and we have observed that the British Government also consider it as such a step. For us, as also, I hope, for you, Indian

independence should involve the freedom of other nations hitherto under foreign rule and exploitation

Regard being had to the conditions prevailing in the country, an endeavour has been made to make the list as inclusive as possible

We have added three names of the leaders of the All-India Muslim League but, of course, it is understood that the final choice in regard to these three names lies with the Muslim League. We have tried in the best way we can to contact the All-India Muslim League as such but have failed

The qualification we have sought in each case has been the greatest ability available, the common factor being independence as the immediate objective after the defeat of Japan

One of the names included in the list is that of a present member of the Executive Council. We are strongly of opinion that in order to start anew the old members of the Executive Council should not be included. The name given belongs to a new member who is not associated with past policies

My name has also been included in the list, but may I say, that it is only after the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I have agreed to my Committee's direction in this matter. My colleagues felt that I must accept this responsibility. What has finally weighed with me is the fact that the post is one of duty

It has not been possible for us to consult all those whose names have been suggested. In the event of any of those suggested being unable to serve, I trust you will allow us to submit alternative names

The Committee have tried to enter into the spirit of the proposals. They have recognised in you the leader of the Conference in the best sense of the word—a designation carefully chosen by yourself. As such you are at liberty to draw attention to any discrepancy you may detect in the list or any difficulty that His Majesty's Government may feel. I need hardly assure you that it will be my Committee's best

endeavour to accommodate you or His Majesty's Government. It is my earnest wish that you will not put an undue strain on my Committee by imposing any alteration in the list which you as leader will finally prepare before submitting it to the Conference.

I have added some brief particulars about the names on the list hereto attached.

(Note For obvious reasons passages relating to names have been omitted from the above letter)

The Viceroy had a final meeting with Mr Jinnah on the 11th July at 3 p.m. The list of names of Muslim members of the proposed Council was shown to Mr Jinnah but the latter found it unacceptable. The Viceroy met Gandhiji the same evening and the Congress President on 12th July. The Viceroy among other things told them that he had been unable to prevail upon Mr Jinnah to submit a list on behalf of Muslim League and that as a consequence he might have to dissolve the Conference. The Congress President consulted the Working Committee and it was decided to send the following letter to the Viceroy.

Azad to Wavell

Aimsdell

Simla, July 13, 1945

Dear Lord Wavell,

In my letter to you of July 7th forwarding a list of names on behalf of the Congress for the proposed Executive Council, I had suggested that you might draw our attention to any discrepancy in our list or any difficulty that His Majesty's Government may feel. I had hoped that this list as well as any other list or names contemplated by you would be discussed by you with me, and I had assured you that it would be my Committee's best endeavour to accommodate you. I was surprised, therefore, at the absence of any such consideration during our yesterday's conversation and at your non-disclosure of your list to me. I did not understand this then and do not even now understand

it after discussion with my colleagues. You hesitated because you thought that your list might not be acceptable to my colleagues or me. It is not possible for me to say, without knowing the contents of the list what our reaction to it would have been. But I feel that in thinking as you did you were less than fair to Congressmen who, on your own admission, had tried, in spite of heavy odds, to help you in every way possible. I would like to emphasise the fact that the whole of the Working Committee was released on the 15th June 1945 and your broadcast on the conference was delivered on the previous day, June 14th. Further that many noted Congressmen and colleagues of ours are still under detention and the AICC is still an illegal organisation. Because of long periods of imprisonment most of us are as yet hardly fit for strenuous work. Nevertheless, taking the proposals at their face value, Congressmen have responded to your invitation and rendered all possible help.

In the circumstances I suggest that you owe it to us to show your list and let my Committee have the option if they wish of rejecting it or suggesting modifications. At the Conference you had said that you would discuss your list with the leaders.

I may inform you that what are claimed to be authentic assertions are being made as to the contents of your list. They appear to be startling.

I feel, therefore, that you should show your list not only to me for being discussed with my colleagues but finally place it before the Conference for adoption, unless on second thought you conclude that it must be withdrawn.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) A K Azad

Wavell to Azad

Viceroy's Camp

Simla, 13th July 1945

Dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 13th July. I am sorry if I did not make my position clear to you when I

saw you yesterday As you know, I intend to make a statement when the Conference meets tomorrow and I hope this will make my position quite clear to you In the meantime I am sure that you and your colleagues will attach no importance to the "authentic assertions" to which you refer towards the end of your letter There will naturally be a great deal of irresponsible speculation, but it can certainly not be authentic, as I have not disclosed my selections, and do not intend to do so

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) Wavell

Azad to Wavell

The Simla Conference was dissolved on July 14th and the next day, the Congress President addressed the following letter to the Viceroy on behalf of the Working Committee

Armsdell,
Simla July 15, 1945

Dear Lord Wavell,

After announcing the failure of the Conference, you were good enough to ask for the support of all parties in ensuring a calm atmosphere I do not propose to reiterate the Congress view about the failure I expressed it sufficiently at the Conference But in fairness to you and to ourselves I must point out that co-operation inevitably depends on the removal of obstacles to it Some of these obstacles are of a psychological nature with roots in the past relations between India and England These can only gradually disappear with a change in those relations But there are others of a more tangible kind which serve as constant irritants to our people and which affect our day to day activity They are continually before us In spite of this preoccupation, however, we did not think it desirable to raise this matter, except perhaps rather vaguely in the course of conversations with you, as we were anxious not to place any difficulties in your path when you were dealing with a delicate situation

2 But now that one chapter has ended and our mind, as well as yours, are turned to future possibilities of finding a way out, honourable to all concerned, and leading to the objective of Indian freedom, these obstacles to co-operation cannot be ignored. I am taking the liberty, therefore, of pointing them out to you in the hope that you will have early steps taken to have them removed.

3 The steps that I consider necessary and earnestly urge upon you are

- (a) The ban on all Congress and allied organisations should be removed at once. It has not been possible to convene the A I C C because of its being an illegal organisation.
- (b) all detenus should be released without any condition being imposed upon them, whether the detention was imposed by the Central Government or the Provincial Government.
- (c) all restrictions on the movements of released detenus or prisoners should be removed.
- (d) cases of all prisoners convicted for political or like offences should be examined by a popular judicial tribunal and its verdict should be regarded as final by the Government.
- (e) extra-legal restrictions on the freedom of the Press or on the movement or association of people should be removed so as to make the people feel that they are free to follow normal activities under democratic conditions.
- (f) all pending sentences of hanging arising out of the disturbances of August 1942 should be commuted to life sentences.
- (g) all pending arrests of 'absconders' should be cancelled.
- (h) all prisoners who have served full 14 years should be unconditionally discharged.
- (i) what has been said about prisoners applies equally and with even greater force, to properties, moveable and immovable, and frozen or confiscated.

4 I have not endeavoured to aigue out the justness of the foregoing requirements as I have no doubt that you will yourself appreciate the need for action along the lines indicated. If India is on the eve of having a bona fide national representative Executive, leading to independence after the defeat of Japan, then the necessity for this approach is self-proved and inevitable.

5 There is another matter to which I should like to refer. I need hardly say on behalf of the Congress that whatever the result of your promised effort the Congress is and has always been against the Japanese aggression. Therefore, there will always be on the part of the Congress a desire for the defeat of Japan in her designs upon China or any other aggression on her part. But the thought expressed in this paragraph will be incomplete if I did not inform you that in the Congress estimation, the effort now being made on Indian soil will continue to be looked upon as a British and Allied effort, so long as there is not at the Centre a popular government assisted by provincial popular governments.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd) A K Azad

On the same date the Congress President wrote to the Viceroy asking for his consent to the publication of the correspondence that had passed between them. To this the following reply was given by the Viceroy.

Wavell to Azad

Viceroy's Camp
Simla, 15th July 1945

Dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 14th July. I do not think that as Chairman of a Conference which has now dispersed, I can properly authorise any party or delegate to depart from the decision that the proceedings should be confidential. The decision was not intended to cover the period of the Conference only—the

idea was that the delegates would speak more freely if they knew that what they said was not going to be recorded or published

I am not sure what the correspondence is to which you refer. If it includes the letter you sent me with your list of names, and the list of names itself, you will remember that it was the particular wish of the Conference that the lists sent to me by parties should not be disclosed

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) Wavell

Wavell to Azad

The President's letter of the 15th July about measures to be adopted by the Government to improve the political atmosphere was replied to by the Viceroy on August 24 from New Delhi

Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 24th August, 1945

Dear Maulana Sahib,

I regret that my reply to your letter of 15th July about the measures you recommend for the improvement of the political atmosphere has been delayed. I have now received your telegram of 21st August containing your views on the decision to hold general elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures in the near future.

I deal below with the points raised in paragraph 3 of your letter.

(a) and (i) The bans on the A-ICC and all orthodox Congress organisations have been, or will immediately be, removed. This will leave in force only those imposed by the Central Government on the Forward Bloc, the removal of which is being considered by the Home Department, as a result of the Japanese surrender, by the Governments of the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Bihar on the Congress Socialist Party, and by certain provincial Governments on local organisations which are fostering disorder.

As soon as a ban on any organisation is removed—

- (i) immovable property, of which possession only has been taken by the Government concerned, will be restored to its owners,
- (ii) no legal process which has been completed in respect of movable property will be reversed and no money realised by the sale of such property will be returned, but any articles still in the possession of the Government concerned will be returned, provided that this decision will not extend to such movable property as it is illegal to possess, and that no responsibility will be accepted for any loss or any deterioration in the property returned,
- (iii) Orders forfeiting funds (including moneys, securities and credits) will not be upset, but funds frozen and not forfeited will be returned

(b) and (c) The persons who have been detained without trial or on whose movements restrictions have been imposed have nearly all been in fact placed in preventive detention or have had their movements restricted because there were good grounds for believing that they were in communication with the enemy or that, judging from their past conduct, they were likely to engage in violent activities or terrorism. Now that Japan has surrendered their cases will be reviewed and some of them will no doubt be released as soon as the surrender is effective, simply because the activities it was necessary to prevent will then no longer be possible. But I fear there can be no question at present of indiscriminate releases. You will appreciate that some of the recent pronouncements by Congress leaders on the disturbances of 1942 are not reassuring to those responsible for maintaining law and order.

(d) I am not prepared to establish a special tribunal to examine the cases of all persons convicted for political offences. Those persons have been pro-

perly tried and convicted by competent courts of justice

(e) I am not aware of any restrictions on the freedom of the Press or on the movement or association of people which can be described as "extra-legal", and I am satisfied that in all Provinces unreasonable use is not being made of the legal powers that exist. Those powers will not be used unfairly to hamper the activities of political parties during the elections.

(f) I have commuted to transportation for life the sentences of death passed in the Chimu-Ashti, Kulasekharapatnam, Fatwa and Jaunpur cases.

(g) I regret that I cannot pass a general order absolving absconders from liability to arrest. Many of those absconders have committed serious crimes.

(h) I will have the cases of all prisoners who have served more than 14 years examined.

In view of the surrender of Japan you will not, I think, expect me to comment on paragraph 5 of your letter.

In your telegram of 21st August you suggest that normal conditions must be restored before elections can be held. After nearly six years of war it seems to me impossible for India to return to normal for some little time. Both Governments and candidates have always in the past been strongly opposed to general elections except in the winter months, so that the postponement of elections now would have meant a delay of one year. With the removal of the bans on orthodox Congress organisations and the accelerated release of persons still in detention I do not think that the Congress Party will be under any serious handicap. It is my aim to restore normal conditions as soon as I can. The Congress Party could assist me materially in doing so if they would refrain from public approbation of acts of violence.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) Wavell

ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

The All-India Congress Committee held a three-day Session in Bombay on 21st, 22nd and 23rd September. The place of the meeting was the same as that of the momentous A. I. C. C. meeting of 7th and 8th August 1942, viz., the Gowalia Tank maidan. The Session was a stupendous success. People demonstrated their devotion to the Congress and its leaders in spite of rain and mud. The pandal was constructed officially to accommodate 25,000 people, but actually many more managed to get in. The crowds in the environs must have numbered a hundred thousand.

The A. I. C. C. passed all the Resolutions placed before it by the Working Committee. The Resolution on "Fresh Elections to Legislatures" (published on page 287 supra) was altered by the Working Committee in view of the broadcasts of Mr. Attlee and of Lord Wavell. Some more Resolutions were moved by the Working Committee. The full text of these as well as of the altered Resolution re Elections follows.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN BOMBAY (SEPTEMBER 21, 22 and 23)

Amendment of Congress Constitution

In view of the fact that the Congress has not been able to hold its annual session after the Ramgarh Session held in March 1940, and in view of the fact that events have happened during the past five years which require that the constitution of the Congress be considered in its entirety, it is resolved that a Committee consisting of the following persons with power to co-opt two more be formed to consider the whole question and to make proposals for such amendments and additions to the Congress constitution as may appear necessary. In particular the committee is authorised to consider the question as to how the Congress committees should be related to other independent organisations and to groups within the Congress committees themselves. The committee is also authorised

to consult Provincial Congress Committees and such other persons or bodies as it may consider necessary. The Committee shall submit its report to the Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee by the 31st December to be considered by the Working Committee and submitted to the open session of the Congress.

Names of the members of the Committee —

- 1 Shri Rajendra Prasad
- 2 „ Narendra Deo
- 3 „ Pattabhi Sitaramayya
- 4 „ R R Divakar, and
- 5 „ J B Kripalani

China and South-East Asia

The A I C C sends its greetings to the people of China and to the peoples of the countries of South-East Asia and expresses its deep satisfaction at the conclusion of the war which has ravaged these countries and caused enormous suffering and loss to their peoples. The Committee earnestly trusts that the people of China, who have faced unflinchingly and with heroic steadfastness and courage over eight years of horrible war and disaster, will rise to even greater heights in the years of peace to come and build up a nation united and strong of purpose for peace and freedom and closely allied to India and the other countries of Asia.

The A I C C views with anxiety the attempts that are being made to maintain the political and economic subjection of Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia. To continue imperialist domination over these countries, under whatever name or guise, would be a denial and repudiation of the professions made by the United Nations during war time and would sow the seeds of future wars. India, desiring the freedom of all Asiatic, as well as other, countries would deeply resent the continuation of an imperialist policy in South-East Asia. In particular, the A I C C would take strong objection to the use of Indian troops in maintaining imperialist domination over any of these countries of South-East or Western Asia.

A free India will inevitably seek close and friendly associations with her neighbour countries, and would especially seek to develop common policies for defence, trade and economic and cultural development with China, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon as well as the countries of the Middle East

Indian interests in Burma and Malaya

The A I C C, believing as it does in the right to freedom of all countries, holds that the people of each country have the further right to develop their own resources in such manner and with such means as they think fit. Where Indian labour has been employed and Indian capital invested, the Committee considers that their just interests should be properly safeguarded with due regard to the primary claims and interests of the people of the country concerned. All such problems should be considered by the representatives of those countries and of India on a basis of mutual adjustment. No concessions should be given or new vested interests created by British authorities in favour of foreign capital in Burma and Malaya, which curtail the rights of the peoples of those countries or which injure existing Indian interests there. Trade relations of an enduring character, and problems relating to the movement of population can only be properly considered and settled by representatives of free India, free Burma and free Malaya.

Affiliation of the Anjuman-e-Watan of Baluchistan

The A I C C having considered the application of the Anjuman-e-Watan of Baluchistan for affiliation to the Congress, resolves that under Article XIX (h) of the Constitution, the Anjuman-e-Watan be affiliated. The Working Committee is authorised to consider and determine the terms and conditions for such affiliation and the representation to be granted in the A I C C and the annual session of the Congress.

Constructive Programme

With a view to making the masses of India politically self-conscious, economically self-sufficient and capable of

running the government of a free and independent India, it is necessary that they should be organised in all spheres of life on the widest possible scale. Such organisation can be effectively advanced through the fifteenfold constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi and an enlightened recognition of non-violence. This Committee therefore calls upon all subordinate Congress Committees and Congressmen to go on with the constructive programme and take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to it.

Indian States

The A I C C offers its congratulations to those people of the States who have participated in the movement that followed the Resolution of August 1942, and have faced with courage and the spirit of sacrifice the repression that followed.

The Committee notes with regret the continuance of repression even now in some of the States and hopes that the Governments concerned will take all necessary steps to release all prisoners and detenus and withdraw all pending prosecutions and warrants of arrest and restore normal conditions.

The new proposals of the British Government and the Elections

The A I C C has carefully considered Lord Wavell's and the British Prime Minister's broadcasts on the steps proposed to be taken by British authority in India. These proposals repeat, with unimportant variations, the offer made in March 1942 by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British Government, an offer which was not accepted by the Congress. Neither the end of the War nor the change of Government in Great Britain appears to have resulted in any real change in British policy towards India, which seems to be based on delaying every advance and in attempting to create new problems and fresh complications. It is significant that there is no mention in these broadcasts of the independence of India. Nothing short of independence can be acceptable to the Congress and the country. The proposals now made are, in the opinion of the A I C C, vague, inadequate and unsatisfactory.

The announcement that general elections will be held for the Central and Provincial Assemblies has been made in a manner and in circumstances which arouse suspicion. The sudden dissolution of the legislatures in some provinces has emphasised the hostility of the present governmental authorities to even the possibility of popular government in the meantime, and is totally indefensible. The Central Assembly is still governed by the Act of 1919. To continue such an impotent and undemocratic Central legislature, constituted on a franchise of less than one per cent of the population, can have no justification in the context of Indian freedom. If elections for the Central Legislature are to be held, they must at least be on a properly revised register, even though this might involve some little delay. In spite of assurances, the electoral rolls for the Central and Provincial Assemblies are not being properly revised.

Further, free and fair elections are hardly possible when several organisations, like the Congress Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc, and Kisan organisations are still under ban, when thousands are still held in detention without trial, or are undergoing sentences of imprisonment in connection with political activities, when in many places public meetings cannot be held without previous permission of the authorities, and when many persons are labouring under disqualifications arising out of their conviction for political offences.

It has become notorious that the present Government in India is responsible for the widespread corruption that prevails in the country, for the gross mismanagement of the food and cloth problem, and for the supreme tragedy of the Bengal famine. Yet it is declared that, pending elections and for many months at least, this incompetent and corrupt administration shall continue its misrule. The proposals of the British Government, become, in this context, still more significant indications of their desire to hold on to power in India as long as they possibly can and with all the means and methods at their disposal.

In spite of the handicaps that the Congress will labour under, as related above, and in order to demonstrate the

will of the people, especially on the issue of the immediate transfer of power, the AICC resolves that the forthcoming elections be contested, and directs the Working Committee to take all necessary steps in this behalf. The Committee is confident not only that the people will respond to the call of the Congress on this vital and urgent issue, but will also, with the added strength and assurance that the past years have given them, carry the struggle for the independence of India to a successful issue in the near future.

PREMIER ON COUNTRY'S GROWTH WITHIN COMMONWEALTH

Mr. Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain

London, November, 9, 1945

"India's complete freedom has been there for the taking ever since the Cripps offer in 1942

The only obstacle so far—a very grave obstacle—has been the failure of the Indian communities to agree among themselves

The pace of advance towards self-government was decided not so much by the degree of culture that had been achieved, but by the extent to which a people was either homogenous, or, when it comprised more than one community, had realised that tolerance was the essence of democracy

You will find that constitutional advance is restricted not by the desire of Great Britain to dominate, but by the failure of communities to trust each other. Tolerance is a slow growth, but until it exists, freedom and democracy cannot flourish."

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The Karachi Session of the Congress passed a Resolution on Fundamental Rights, which was amended at a subsequent meeting of the AICC. The following is the text of the Resolution as approved by the AICC in August 1931 —

“This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what ‘Swaraj’, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide, for the following

1. (i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for purposes not opposed to law or morality

(ii) Every Citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality

(iii) The culture, language and script of every minority and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected

(iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of caste, creed or sex

(v) No disability attaches to any citizen, by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling

(vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public

(vii) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf

(viii) No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered into, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with the law

(ix) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions

(x) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage

(xi) The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education

(xii) The State shall confer no titles

(xiii) There shall be no capital punishment

(xiv) Every citizen shall be free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and shall be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India

2 (i) The organization of economic life must conform to the principles of justice, to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living for all

(ii) The State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment

3 Labour shall be freed from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom

4 Protection of women workers, and especially, adequate provision for leave during maternity periods

5 Children of school-going age shall not be employed in mines and factories

6 Peasants and workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interests

7 The system of land tenure and revenue and rent shall be reformed and an equitable adjustment made of

the burden on agricultural land, immediately affording relief to the small peasantry by a substantial reduction of the agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them, and in the case of uneconomic holdings, exempting them from rent, so long as necessary, with such relief as may be just and necessary to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent, and to the same end, imposing a graded tax on net income from land above a reasonable minimum

8. Death duties on a graduated scale shall be levied on property above a fixed minimum

9 There shall be a drastic reduction of Military expenditure so as to bring it down to at least one-half of the present scale

10 Expenditure and salaries in Civil departments shall be largely reduced No servant of the State, other than specially employed experts and the like, shall be paid above a certain fixed figure, which should not ordinarily exceed Rs 500 per month

11 No duty shall be levied on salt manufactured in India

12 The State shall protect indigenous cloth, and for this purpose pursue the policy of exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country and adopt such other measures as may be found necessary The State shall also protect other indigenous industries when necessary against foreign competition.

13 Intoxicating drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited, except for medicinal purposes

14 Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest

15 The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport

16 Relief of agricultural indebtedness, and control of usury direct and indirect

17. The State shall provide for the Military training of citizens so as to organize an instrument of national defence apart from the regular Military forces,

INDIA IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

London, Dec. 4, 1945

Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Labour Secretary of State for India, made the following statement in the House of Lords

"The statement made by the Viceroy after his return to India contemplates the steps which His Majesty's Government propose should be taken to promote the early realisation of full self-Government in India

The full significance of these proposals does not seem to have been properly appreciated in India. Since it is the firm conviction of His Majesty's Government that it is by, and in consultation with, directly elected representatives of the Indian people that decisions as to the future governance of British India should be taken, it was a necessary preliminary that elections should be held to the Provincial Legislatures and the Central Assembly in India. It was announced that after the elections in India, preparatory discussions would be held with the elected representatives of British India and with the Indian States in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing the constitution.

Unjustified suggestions have gained wide currency in India that these discussions would be a fruitful source of delay. I desire to make it plain that His Majesty's Government regard the setting up of a constitution-making body, by which Indians will decide their own future, and also the other proposals embodied in the announcement, as a matter of the greatest urgency. This misunderstanding has led His Majesty's Government to consider whether opportunities of personal contact between this country and India, which have been greatly interrupted during recent years, cannot now be increased. They regard it as a matter of importance that members of our own Parliament should have an opportunity to meet leading political Indian personalities to learn their views at first hand. They would also be able to convey in person the general wish and desire of the people of this country that India should speedily attain her full and rightful position as an independent partner State in the British Commonwealth, and the desire of Parliament to do everything within our power

to promote the speedy attainment of that objective His Majesty's Government are, therefore, arranging for a Parliamentary delegation to go to India under the auspices of the Empire Parliamentary Association. The intention is that this party should leave this country as soon as possible. In view of the difficulties of transport, it will be limited in size. The delegation will be selected by the Association in consultation with the parliamentary representatives of the chief political parties in this country.

During the transition towards complete self-Government, India will be passing through difficult times. No greater disservice could be done to the future Indian Government and to the cause of democracy than to permit the foundations of the State to be weakened and the loyalty of its servants to those who are in authority to be undermined before that new Government comes into being. Therefore, the Government of India cannot divest itself of the responsibility which rests upon it and upon all the Provincial Governments of preserving law and order and of resisting any attempt to resolve the constitutional issue by force. The realisation of full self-government can only come by the orderly and peaceful transfer of control of the machinery of the State to purely Indian authority. His Majesty's Government could not permit any attempt to be made to break down the loyalty of the administrative services or of the Indian armed forces, and they will give full support to the Government of India in securing that their servants are protected in the performance of their duty, and that the future constitution of India shall not be called into being by force or threat of force."

WAVELL'S SPEECH

CALCUTTA, Dec 10, 1945

Lord Wavell addressed the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta. In the course of his address he said —

"I come to the political situation, on the issue of which all depends progress or catastrophe. I intend to give you my views as clearly and frankly as I can.

"India has before her great opportunities, the greatest she has ever had, for political freedom, for industrial and agricultural development, for progress towards solving her problems of poverty, illiteracy, ill-health. I need not enlarge on this theme. You are all, I am sure, aware of it yourselves. My tours over India in the last two years have certainly made me aware of all that is being done and of the quickening spirit of enterprise and earnestness in plans to improve agriculture, industry, health, education, and other branches of welfare. India's opportunities are hers to take.

"I can assure you unreservedly that the British Government and the British people honestly and sincerely wish the Indian people to have their political freedom and a government, or governments, of their own choice. But there are certain elements of the problem which we must recognise. It is not a simple problem, it cannot and will not be solved by repeating a password or formula. "Quit India" will not act as the magic 'Sesame' which opened Ali Baba's cave. It cannot and will not be solved by violence. Disorder and violence are in fact the one thing that may check the pace of India's progress.

"There are various parties to the settlement who must somehow or other reach a measure of agreement amongst themselves. Congress, the largest political party in India, the minorities, of whom the Muslims are the most numerous and most important, the rulers of Indian States, and the British Government.

"The objective of all is the same—the freedom and welfare of India. I do not believe an agreed solution between the parties is impossible, I do not believe it would even be very difficult, given goodwill, commonsense and patience on all sides. And yet we stand on the edge of a tragedy.

"For it will be a grim tragedy for India and for the world, if an atmosphere of racial and communal hatred is allowed to prejudice the discussions which are to take

place next year, and if violence results from that atmosphere

"In the commercial world you do not, I imagine, preface delicate negotiations with another firm by unbridled abuse of that firm and its methods of business. Yet that is how delicate political negotiations are being prefaced in India at present

"I can assure you that His Majesty's Government, and I as their agent, will do our best to secure agreement, to help India to form a constitution, and to secure the support of the principal parties in the Central Government so as to enable them to bear a full share of responsibility for administering the country during the interval before the change of constitution can be made. His Majesty's Government has recently said so clearly, has emphasised the urgency it attaches to a solution, and means what it says. But I must have help and co-operation in securing a satisfactory solution, and no solution will be satisfactory which will result in chaos and bloodshed, interference with trade and industry and perhaps famine and general misery

"You are men of business, you realise better than anyone the necessity for peaceful development. I am an old soldier, I perhaps know better than any of you the horrors and wastefulness of bloodshed and strife, particularly civil strife. We have to avoid this, we can avoid it. We have to agree between ourselves, we can agree, if we are really determined to do so, Hindus and Muslims have got to live together in this great land, they surely can arrange the terms on which they will do so. The Indian States, which include so large a part of India and its peoples, have to be accommodated within the Indian union, if that is to be determined to do so. Hindus and Muslims have got to live of India, and often a very progressive one. Finally, there is the British Government and the British people, I repeat that it is our earnest wish and endeavour to give India freedom, but we cannot and will not abandon our responsibilities without bringing about some reasonable settlement.

"I do appeal, most solemnly and earnestly, at this critical moment of Indian history, for goodwill on the part of all leaders. We are going through a very difficult and testing time, and it will need coolness and wisdom if we are to avoid calamity. In so far as I can help by personal contact, I am always prepared to do so. I can assure the services, as His Majesty's Government has just done, that they will receive all support in the proper fulfilment of their duty.

"Gentlemen, I have tried to put before you two things which I see, or think I see clearly, the golden opportunity in front of India, if her leaders will exercise goodwill and moderation: the peril in which we stand today of violence and strife which may ruin India for a generation or more.

"It is a time when every man in any position of responsibility must determine to do all in his power to bring about a just and lasting settlement of India's problems without plunging this great land into conflict. The leaders of India, that is all of us who have power of responsibility in any field—political, administrative, commercial, proprietary—are, or should be, only the servants of the masses, the 400 millions in India who stand in such need of advancement, enlightenment and refreshment. On our wisdom and on our understanding of one another hangs their fate.

"I do not think that there is any likelihood of the complete removal of the safeguarding clauses of the Act until there is a general revision of the Constitution Act and a commercial treaty between Great Britain and India, but the Government of India is aware of the natural desire of Indians to develop and control the basic industries with their own capital and management as far as possible, and will not disregard it. To my mind, however, goodwill and cordial relations are of greater importance to both British and Indian business than clauses in an Act, and the establishment of such relations is at present and will be in the future the real safeguard for the interests of both. I firmly believe that co-operation between British and Indian enterprise in an atmosphere of goodwill provides the best means for the industrial development of India in the quickest and most fruitful manner."

WORKING COMMITTEE'S EXPLANATION REGARDING

ELECTION MANIFESTO

*Calcutta, .
December 11, 1945.*

"The All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held in Bombay in September last resolved that a manifesto containing the policy and programme of the Congress for the information of the public and the guidance of the Congress candidates in the forthcoming general elections be prepared by the Working Committee and placed before the A I C C for consideration and adoption Further it authorised the Working Committee to issue an earlier manifesto for the Central Assembly elections Accordingly this latter election manifesto has already been issued to the public. The Working Committee regret that owing to the nearness of the general elections in the Provinces it is not feasible now to hold a meeting of the A I C C. in the near future to consider the fuller manifesto, as contemplated by the A I C C They have, therefore, themselves prepared this manifesto and issued it for the information of the public and guidance of Congress candidates "

CONGRESS ELECTION MANIFESTO

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to FREEDOM and INDEPENDENCE. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone sufferings in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people, by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent 3 years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, the Congress has risen stronger than ever and become more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people

as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius, it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or Provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution. This Constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise. The Federation of India must be a willing Union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.

The Constitution shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following —

1 Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.

2 Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

3 The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

4 All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

5 No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

6 All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public

7 Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf

8 No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law

9 The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions

10 The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage

11 The State shall provide for free and compulsory basic education

12 Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India

The State shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and the development of the backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in national life. In particular, the State will help in the development of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economic progress of the scheduled classes

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority in utter disregard of Indian

interests and views, and an incompetence in administration reached a new height leading to terrible famine and widespread misery. There is no way to solving any of these urgent problems except through "freedom" and "independence" The content of political freedom must be both economic and social

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standard of the masses It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities It is by their well-being an advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities, must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others But all this must be done with the primary object of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual

For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and co-ordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that Free India may develop into a Co-operative Commonwealth The State must, therefore, own or control key and basic industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport Currency and exchange, banking and insurance, must be regulated in the national interest

Though poverty is widespread in India, it is essentially a rural problem, caused chiefly by over-pressure on land and lack of other wealth-producing occupations India

under British rule has been progressively ruralised, many of her avenues of work and employment closed, and a vast mass of the population thrown on the land, which has undergone continuous fragmentation, till a very large number of holdings have become uneconomic. It is essential, therefore, that the problem of the land should be dealt with in all its aspects. Agriculture has to be improved on scientific lines and industry has to be developed rapidly in its various forms large-scale, medium and small so as not only to produce wealth, but also to absorb people from the land. In particular, cottage industries have to be encouraged both as whole-time and part-time occupations. It is essential that in planning and the development of industry, while maximum wealth production for the community should be aimed at, it should be borne in mind that this is not done at the cost of creating fresh unemployment. Planning must lead to maximum employment, indeed to the employment of every able-bodied person. Landless labourers should have opportunities of work offered to them and be absorbed in agriculture or industry.

The reform of the land system, which is so urgently needed in India, involves the removal of intermediaries between the peasant and the State. The rights of such intermediaries should, therefore, be acquired on payment of equitable compensation. While individualist farming or peasant proprietorship should continue, progressive agriculture as well as the creation of new social values and incentives require some system of co-operative farming suited to Indian conditions. Any such change can, however, be made only with the goodwill and agreement of the peasantry concerned. It is desirable, therefore, that experimental co-operative farms should be organised with State help in various parts of India. There should also be large State farms for demonstrative and experimental purposes.

In the development of land and industry there has to be a proper integration and balance, between rural and urban economy. In the past, rural economy has suffered, and the town and city have prospered at the cost of village. This has to be righted and an attempt made to equalise, so far as possible, the standards of life of town dwellers.

and villagers Industry should not be concentrated in particular provinces, so as to give a balanced economy to each province and it should be decentralised, as far as this is possible without sacrifice of efficiency Both the development of land and of industry, as well as the health and well-being of the people, require the harnessing and proper utilisation of the vast energy that is represented by the great rivers of India, which is not only largely running to waste but is often the cause of great injury to the land and the people who live on it River commissions should be constituted to undertake this task in order to promote irrigation and ensure an even and continuous supply of water, to prevent disastrous floods and soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, to develop hydro-electric power, and in other ways to help in raising the general standard of life, especially in the rural areas The power resources of the country have to be developed rapidly in this and other ways in order to provide the necessary foundation for the growth of industry and agriculture

Adequate arrangement should be made for the education of the masses with a view to raising them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, and to fit them for the new forms of work and services which will open out before them Public health services, which are essential for the growth of the nation, should be provided for on the widest scale and in this, as in other matters, the needs of the rural areas should receive special attention These should include special provisions for maternity and child welfare Conditions should thus be created in which every individual has an equal opportunity for advance in every field of national activity and there is social security for all

Science in its innumerable fields of activity has played an ever-increasing part in influencing and moulding human life and will do so in even greater measure in the future Industrial, agricultural and cultural advance, as well as national defence, depend upon it Scientific research is, therefore, a basic and essential activity of the State and should be organised and encouraged on the widest scale.

In regard to labour, the State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them a minimum wage and a decent standard of living, proper housing, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness, and unemployment. Workers shall have the right to form Unions to protect their interests.

Rural indebtedness has in the past crushed the agricultural population, and though, owing to various causes in recent years this has grown less, the burden still continues and must be removed. Cheap credit must be made available through co-operatives. Co-operatives should also be organised for other purposes both in rural and urban areas. In particular, industrial co-operatives should be encouraged as being especially suited for the development of small-scale industry on a democratic basis.

While the immediate and urgent problems of India can only be effectively tackled by joint and planned attack on all fronts political, economic, agricultural, industrial and social—certain needs are of paramount importance today. Owing to the gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Government an incredible amount of suffering has been caused to the people of India. Millions have died of starvation, and scarcity of food and clothing is still widespread. Corruption in the services and in all matters pertaining to the supply and control of the vital necessities of life is rampant and has become intolerable. These urgent problems require immediate attention.

In International affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a World Federation of Free Nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours. In the Far East, in South-East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years.

and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and co-operation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of Imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On the 8th of August, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's story. By its demands and challenge the Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections.

The Congress, therefore, appeals to the voters all over the country to support Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. In these elections, petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries; only one thing counts, the Freedom and Independence of our Motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. Many a time the people of India have taken the Pledge of Independence, that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. The time is coming when we shall redeem it in full. This election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those, who care and long for freedom and the independence of India, meet this test with strength and confidence, and march together to the Free India of our dreams.

Calcutta,

December 11, 1945.

WORKING COMMITTEES RESOLUTIONS

*Calcutta,
Dec. 11 and 12 1945*

NON-VIOLENCE REAFFIRMED

"After the arrest of the principal Congressmen in August of 1942, the unguided masses took the reins in their own hands and acted almost spontaneously. If many acts of heroism and sacrifice are to their credit, there were acts done which could not be included in non-violence. It is, therefore, necessary for the Working Committee to affirm for the guidance of all concerned that the policy of non-violence adopted in 1920 by the Congress continues unabated and that such non-violence does not include burning of public property, cutting of telegraph wires, derailing trains and intimidation. The Working Committee is of opinion that the policy of non-violence as detailed in the Congress resolution of 1920 since expanded and explained from time to time, and action in accordance with it, has raised India to a height never attained before.

"The Working Committee is further of opinion that the constructive activities of the Congress, beginning with the spinning wheel and Khadi as the centre, are emblematic of the policy of non-violence and that every other Congress activity, including what is known as the Parliamentary programme, is subservient to and designed to promote the constructive activities as explained by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Working Committee is of opinion that Civil Disobedience, mass or any other, meant for the attainment of freedom, is inconceivable without the adoption of the constructive programme on the widest scale possible by the masses of India."

RESOLUTION ON I.N.A

"Whilst the Congress must feel proud of the sacrifice, discipline, patriotism, bravery and the spirit of unity dis-

played by the Azad Hind Fouj, organised as an independent force in foreign countries under unprecedented conditions by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, and whilst it is right and proper for the Congress to defend the members of that body now undergoing trial and to aid its sufferers, Congressmen must not forget that this support and sympathy do not mean that the Congress has in any way deviated from its policy of attaining Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means "

MEDICAL MISSION TO MALAYA AND BURMA

"In view of the serious and wide-spread distress prevailing among Indians in Burma and Malaya for want of food and medical attention and cloth scarcity, the Working Committee resolve that a medical mission be sent on behalf of the Congress to Burma and Malaya in order to give medical and other needed relief, more especially to INA and Indian Independence League personnel there. The Committee authorises Dr B C Roy to organise such a mission in consultation with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Chairman of the INA Inquiry and Relief Committee, and to arrange for its despatch at an early date

The Working Committee is of the opinion that the demonstrations by the students of Calcutta on Nov 21, resulting in the loss of precious student life and many injured from bullet wounds and the events thereafter, demand an open and impartial judicial inquiry by the Governor of Bengal. Meanwhile, the Committee record their opinion that the students of Calcutta showed the utmost bravery of the non-violent type by remaining unmoved under a shower of bullets "

PROTEST AGAINST USE OF INDIAN TROOPS

"The Working Committee has watched with admiration and sympathy the valiant struggle in defence of their newly-won Republic and independence which the people of Indonesia have been carrying on with steadfast courage and determination against British and Dutch forces. Thus

Committee emphatically condemns the wanton invasion of Java and other parts of Indonesia in order to impose Dutch Imperialist domination on their inhabitants against their unanimous demand for a free state. Any support from any quarter to Imperialist designs in Indonesia, Indo-China and elsewhere is resented throughout Asia as culpable violation of the professed aims of the United Nations and the undeniable right of Asian nationals. This will destroy the chance of international understanding and the very basis of any future world organisation. The Committee regrets that the United States of America had by its passive attitude encouraged these Imperialist aggressions.

While expressing its heartiest sympathy with the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese nationalists for the enormous loss and suffering inflicted upon them by the Imperialist powers, this Committee is particularly distressed to find the units of the Indian Army arrayed against the Indonesians and Indo-Chinese and views with deep indignation this mischievous misuse of the Indian forces by the British Government.

This Committee notes with resentment that the Government of India has not granted necessary facilities to enable Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed to Java in response to Dr Sukarno's invitation and reaffirms its determination to put an end to India's political subjection to which the present intolerable state of humiliating helplessness is due."

THREE RESOLUTIONS.

The Congress Working Committee passed three more resolutions. The first of these related to the plight of Indians in Burma and Malaya. The second resolution appointed an "INA Inquiry and Relief Committee". The third resolution related to the affiliation granted by the AICC to the Anjuman-e-Vatan of Baluchistan.

Indians in Burma and Malaya.

Following is the text of the Working Committee's resolution on Burma and Malaya.

"The Working Committee have noted with grave disquiet the reports of the treatment of Indians by the authorities in Burma and Malaya. Many have been arrested and interned or put in prison and no proper opportunities for defence have been given. Even information about them is lacking, and this absence of news is causing anxiety to their friends and relations in India. Owing to the deterioration in the economic conditions of these countries and the scarcity of food and the invalidation of the currency, the civil population is suffering from want and distress. The considerable Indian population there suffers even more than others for they receive no help or protection from the Government of India, and are almost in the position of being State-less individuals and groups, for whom no one assumes responsibility. While the Government of India is taking no adequate steps to help these Indians abroad, it is giving no facilities to representatives of Defence and Relief Committees and public men to visit Burma and Malaya to give the help that their countrymen so urgently need. The Working Committee appoint Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed to Burma and Malaya on their behalf, to inquire into the condition of Indians there and to arrange for their defence and other help.

"The Working Committee also call upon Indians in Burma and Malaya to organise Defence and Relief Committees in both countries in order to help themselves and all their countrymen in the hour of their distress. These Committees should contact with the Central Defence and Relief Committees in India and work in co-operation with them."

I.N.A Inquiry and Relief.

Following is the text of the resolution on I.N.A Inquiry and Relief Committee:

"In view of the many problems other than those of legal defence arising in connection with the per-

sonnel of the Azad Hind Fouj, it is resolved to form a Committee separate from the INA Defence Committee, which has already been constituted in order to gather information and give relief where needed to this personnel. This committee will be called the 'INA Inquiry and Relief Committee' and will consist of the under-mentioned persons. The Committee will also arrange to gather full information about the dependents of those who died in the service of the INA. The method of organising relief should be, except for urgent and immediate purposes, to provide productive work.

Names of members of the INA Inquiry and Relief Committee—

Saidar Vallabhbhai Patel (Chairman), Jawaharlal Nehru, J B Kripalani, Sarat Chandra Bose, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, M Daud Ghaznavi, Sri Prakasam (Secretary), Raghunandan Saran, Khurshedben Naoroji, Rao Saheb Patwardhan, Sardar Pratap Singh a representative of the Bombay INA Committee, with power to add to their number.

The Treasurer of the All-India Congress Committee shall be in charge of the fund collected for INA. Defence and Inquiry and Relief work."

Anjuman-e-Watan

The following is the resolution regarding Anjuman-e-Watan —

"With reference to the affiliation of the Anjuman-e-Watan of Baluchistan by the AICC, the Working Committee resolves that the following representation be granted to it

2 members of the AICC and 7 delegates for the annual session of the Congress"

EXPULSION OF "REDS" FROM CONGRESS

CALCUTTA, Dec 12 (API)

All the eight Communist members of the AICC are being expelled from membership of the Committee under the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the subject, which has been released today. The following is the text of the Congress Working Committee's resolution.

"The report of the Sub-Committee appointed to consider the charges brought against the Communist members of the AICC was considered and their recommendations were approved

It is resolved that disciplinary action be taken against (1) S G Sardesai, (2) V G Bhagvat, (3) V D Chitale, (4) K M Ashraf, (5) S Sajjad-Zahir, (6) Sohan Singh Joshi, (7) Karyanand Sarma and (8) T D Bharadwaji, and their names be removed from membership of the AICC and from all other elective Congress Committees of which they may be members

Further that Provincial Congress Committees should be directed to take similar action for the removal from all Congress elective offices of members of the Communist Party of India "

Sub-Committee's Report

The special Sub-Committee appointed by the Congress Working Committee at Poona in September last consisting of Saidar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant made the following recommendations to the Working Committee about communists in the Congress

A large number of complaints against the activities of the Communist Party and its individual members were received by the AICC Office from subordinate Congress Committees and also from some prominent Congressmen. The Working Committee appointed a sub-committee to

examine the material and to take such action as might be necessary. We framed certain charges after carefully and dispassionately weighing the evidence.

The charge-sheet (Annexure A) was delivered to the Communist members of the AICC on September 21. They were asked to send their reply in writing within two weeks. They were also told that they could, if they so desired, see the members of the Sub-Committee and explain their position personally. On their request a copy of the report (Annexure B) on which the charges were based was given to them on September 24. A letter dated September 28 was subsequently received from Shri Sardesai on their behalf asking for a week's extension to enable them to prepare their reply to the charge-sheet. This request was granted. On the expiry of the period of three weeks another communication was received from Shri Sardesai stating that it had not been possible for them to prepare the reply within even the extended period. He definitely promised to send the same by the end of October, but again failed to do so. Their reply was despatched from Bombay about a month later on the 27th of November.

It is a bulky volume meant primarily for propaganda. Hardly any attempt has been made in it to meet the specific charges, nor is there a word of regret in it. The evidence on which the charges are based is not impugned. The authenticity of the documents cited in the report is accepted. The signatories have throughout pleaded justification and attacked the fundamental policy of the Congress in unmistakable terms. Their explanation amounts to a trade against the Congress. Its tone throughout is one of self-righteous arrogance. It leaves no doubt whatsoever about the validity of the charges framed against them. It is clear from their reply that they have been actively opposing and obstructing the policy and the programme of the Congress for a considerable time. They are still acting in a hostile manner so as to undermine and injure the prestige and position of the Congress organisation.

They have altogether forfeited the confidence of the Congress and are unworthy to occupy any responsible or elective place in the Congress. They seem to have already realised their position. Conscious of their guilt, their members have already resigned from all subordinate Congress Committees and also from the primary membership of the Congress. We recommend that the eight members of the AICC should be expelled from the AICC and necessary directions should be sent to all Provincial Congress Committees so that they may take appropriate steps wherever necessary to remove members of the Communist Party from all elective offices.

The Congress Working Committee had, through the President of the Congress, communicated the following charge-sheet to the eight Communist members of the All-India Congress Committee:

"That you being a member of the AICC and as such bound loyally to abide by the policy and programme laid down by the AICC from time to time actually opposed such policy and programme from June 1942 onwards and, more especially, actively resisted the policy and programme laid down by the AICC in August 1942.

That you carried on incessant propaganda through newspapers, pamphlets and books, meetings and otherwise, in favour of the war effort, calling the war as it affected the people of India a 'People's War,' when the Congress had advised the people not to co-operate in war activities till the freedom of India had been recognised and a National Government established.

That you pursued this policy in accordance with the declared policy of your party, the Communist Party of India, which was opposing the policy and programme of the Indian National Congress.

That you made grave charges against individual Congressmen and groups within the Congress and the Working Committee of the AICC itself.

And thereby you rendered yourself liable to disciplinary action under the rules of the Congress. You are, therefore, hereby called upon to show cause why such action should not be taken against you."

Sub-Committee Report

In a four-thousand word report submitted to the Congress Working Committee, the special Sub-Committee has elaborately dealt with the part the Communists played during the last three years. This report was submitted before the charge-sheet against the Communist members of the All-India Congress Committee was drawn up and the Sub-Committee recommended their expulsion from the All-India Congress Committee and prevention of their occupying any elective position in the Congress organisation.

The report is captioned as "Charges Against Members of the Communist Party of India in the Congress." The report begins by saying "The AICC Office having received a large number of complaints and accusations against the activities of Communist members of the Congress and of the Communist Party in India generally in relation to the Congress, the Working Committee have referred this matter to us for examination and, if the facts so warrant, to frame charges to which the persons concerned might be invited to reply.

There is a vast mass of paper and reports in the files before us. For the most part they are vague and sometimes irrelevant. Some of the charges, relating to individual or group activity, are serious, but they would require fuller examination and proof before any action could be based on them. We do not propose to take into consideration any of these vague and untrue assertions or to initiate further inquiries, in regard to them at this stage. As we understand the reference made to us, the Working Committee are concerned with the larger issues involved and not so much with individual misdemeanours.

We propose to consider only the broader aspects of the question in this report. It is not without significance, however, that complaints and accusations against Communists' activities in India have been received from a very large number of Congressmen all over India. There is also no doubt that the attitude of the Communist Party towards the communal problem and their unqualified support of the Muslim League's claim for 'Pakistan' have

added to the prevailing estrangement. It is manifest that there is at present widespread and deep sentiment against members of the Communist Party in India, and the Congress rank and file are powerfully influenced by it. We do not propose to allow ourselves to be guided by this sentiment in considering any action which might have to be taken.

Explaining the broad-based nature of the Congress organisation, the report says "The Congress has been more of a movement than a narrow political party. It has, however, functioned as a party also especially in the Legislature. Being an organisation which has indulged in militant action from time to time on an extensive scale, it has inevitably tended to function as a strictly disciplined organisation, even though it consisted of people with differing views on many political and economic matters. These two somewhat differing approaches—as a broad movement and as a disciplined party—have usually been reconciled by allowing full freedom of expression of views and opinions and at the same time insisting on uniformity in action, especially when that action meant a conflict with the British Government in India. In practice this meant freedom in discussing the policy to be laid down, and, when that policy had been determined, to adhere to it as closely as possible, and certainly not to oppose it in any way.

Without that strictness of uniformity in the field of action, the Congress would have faded away as a militant organisation and become an ineffective motley crowd pulling in different directions and wholly incapable of acting. Thus, while different groups continued in the Congress, if any member of the Congress clearly acted against Congress policy, disciplinary action could be, and sometime actually was, taken against him. This applied particularly to such Congressmen as were members of Executive bodies within the organisation. It was manifestly absurd for a person to be a member of an Executive Committee when he or she did not accept the policy which that Committee was supposed to further or even oppose it."

After tracing the history of the growth of the Communist Party in India, the report says that the Commu-

nists always characterised the Congress "as a bourgeois reactionary body" trying to prevent mass urges from following their natural course. In particular the Congress leadership was blamed for coming in the way of the masses. Official Congress policy was often held to ridicule. In spite of this no action was ever taken against the Communists in India by the Congress, particularly because they were so few in numbers and influence that they did not count at all, and partly because they belonged to an illegal organisation, which was being harassed and suppressed by the Governmental authorities. The sympathy of Congressmen always went to all who suffered from Government's repressive policy."

The report continues "Ever since 1936 Communists in India became more friendly to the Congress, exhorted people to join it and tried to enter its local Executives. From then onwards till the middle of 1939, that is for a little over three years, there was often much friction between the Communists and other elements in the Congress, but on the whole they functioned together and no major crisis arose."

Continuing, the report says "This was the background when the war broke out in September 1939. The Communist Party of India, characterising the war as an imperialist war, bitterly attacked the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for not launching a mass struggle immediately after the war began for the emancipation of India."

The report then elaborately quotes extracts from official Communist writings attacking Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leadership for not launching a movement. Particular reference is made to the Communist Party's attack on the Individual Satyagraha launched by the Congress in 1940. The Communist Party organ "The Communist" characterised the Individual Satyagraha movement as "sabotaging all struggle and dashing the national movement to pieces" and declared that "the national movement under bourgeois leadership had entered into a blind alley." The Communists charged the Congress leadership with putting "class above the nation and handing over the national organisers to Imperialism for safe custody."

The report then deals with the situation that arose in the summer of 1941 when Germany attacked Soviet Russia and says "The Communist Party of India naturally felt thus all the more keenly but, in view of their past policy, it was not easy for them suddenly to change their whole attitude to the war. It took them many months to do so but when the change came it was a complete swing over to the other extreme. The slogan of the "Imperialist War" gave place to one of the "People's War" and co-operation with Britain was urged. This was directly opposed to the Congress policy then and later and friction resulted from it. Soon after the Cripps negotiations, the old ban on the Communist Party of India was removed by Government and the Communist Party became a legal organisation in India. As such it carried on intensive propaganda for its new point of view, which brought it into direct conflict with Congress activities and propaganda.

Individual Communists, who were members of Congress Executives, were thus placed in a very invidious position, and as they adhered to the Communist line, complaints against them began to mount up. There were some actual conflicts in public meetings, in Andhra especially, where it was alleged that Communists used violence. Thus the position had already become difficult before the August 1942 Resolution was passed and it was becoming increasingly clear that no person could or should be simultaneously a member of two Executives with differing and hostile policies. In view of the vastness of the Congress organisation and the relative smallness of the Communist Party of India, the problem was not in a sense, of great importance but it created a great deal of bitterness."

The report then reviews the events following the passing of the August 1942 Resolution and the arrest of leaders and the upheaval that followed and says "In this vast conflict between the forces of Indian Nationalism and British Imperialism, when people were being shot down by the thousand and many of the horrors of the war being perpetrated on unarmed people in the towns and countryside alike, the Communist Party of India appeared to be lined up with the British Government in India."

The report then extensively quotes extracts from "The People's War", the Communist Party paper, to prove how the Communists "ceaselessly carried on propaganda against the People's Movement"

Commenting on the first meeting of the Communist Party in September 1942, the report says that the Communist Party of India placed the responsibility for the August disturbances on the Congress Working Committee directly and positively in September 1942, "long before the publication of the Totenham pamphlet on the subject

The resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, says the report, characterised the August movement as "one of national suicide as against national salvation and freedom" Extensive extracts from the Communist Party resolution are quoted by the report which proceeds to point out that there were numerous reports from Congress Committees alleging that the Communists had "consistently condemned the August Resolution of the Congress and vigorously criticised it as being opposed to the country's true interests They accused the Congress and Congressmen as responsible for all the disturbances which followed the August Resolution They had similarly thrown their full weight on the side of the Government, advocating unconditional support of the war effort and dissuading all classes, whether peasants, workers or students, from countenancing anything that might hinder the war effort or actually embarrass the administration

There are also many reports made, apparently after local investigations, showing that the Communists had been violently abusing and vilifying prominent Congressmen, and sometimes co-operating with the police in their activities against some Congressmen in the 'post-August Ninth' Period"

Proceeding the report says "There can be no doubt that the Communists in the Congress, as well as those outside it, have ceaselessly opposed, both in letter and in spirit, the Congress policy from early in 1942 onwards and especially since the resolution of August 8, 1942"

The report next quotes Mr Bhulabhai Desai's findings wherein he says "It does appear that the views and attitude of the Communist Party, after the Ninth August, have been to carry on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress" This conclusion of Mr Bhulabhai Desai, the report says, "is of considerable significance"

In conclusion the report says "At a time when the country was passing through a reign of terror and the Congress was involved in a life and death struggle, no organisation allied with the Congress could, without committing a serious outrage to the ordinary tenets of discipline, indulge in such hostile activities Although we have had to consider largely the past, we might add that even in the present, the policy of the Communist Party of India, as represented by the writings in "People's War", is very far removed from and often opposed to the Congress policy. We are, therefore, of opinion that there is ample evidence on the record before us to establish a strong 'prima facie' case against the members of the Communist Party in the Congress and they should be asked to justify their position and policy and to show cause why action should not be taken against them We have not dealt with individuals in this report, but we can only ask individuals to show cause We suggest that such Communists as are members of the All-India Congress Committee should be asked to do so, as presumably they have a leading position in their Party We understand that it is the desire of the President as well as the Working Committee that full opportunities for explanation and justification be afforded to the Communist Members of the Congress We entirely concur in this opinion We should like to make it clear that the issue before us at present, is not to shut the door of the Congress completely to the Communists, but to consider how far it is desirable to allow persons, who are opposed to the basic Congress policies, to be elected to or remain on Congress Executive bodies which are charged with carrying out those policies"

